

S. Edmund

50/20  
LIVES

OF

THE ENGLISH SAINTS.

---

S. Edmund,

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

---

MANSUETI HÆREDITABUNT TERRAM, ET DELECTABUNTUR IN  
MULTITUDINE PACIS.

LONDON:

JAMES TOOVEY, 192, PICCADILLY.

---

1845.

LONDON :  
Printed by S. & J. BENTLEY, WILSON, and FLEY,  
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

## PREFACE.

---

THE sources for the Life of S. Edmund, though not copious, are of peculiar value and authority, having been written by persons intimately acquainted with him, and that within six years after his death.

i. B. A Life written by Bertrand, one of the archbishop's attendant clerks, and faithfully attached to him. He was spoken of by Archbishop Albert as "*discipulus quem diligebat pater Edmundus, et secretorum ejus conscius.*" After the archbishop's death, he entered the Cistercian order at Pontigny, of which he became prior in 1249. The most complete copy of this Life is that printed, from a copy taken of the original once at Pontigny, in Martene and Durand, *Thesaurus Anecdotorum*, vol. iii. Besides the writer's own means of information, it contains all the particulars furnished by the testimonials which were sent in during the inquiry preceding the canonization. The writer speaks of himself as relating "the things which he had heard and seen." This Life with considerable variation of language, and with some slight additional facts, is found in three Cotton MSS. Cleop. B. i. Faust. B. i. Jul. D. vi. in a Lambeth MS. (No. 135) in Surius (Nov. 16,) in Vincent of Beauvais, (*Speculum Histor.*) in John of Tinmouth, (MS. in Lambeth Library,) and in a Bodleian MS. (Fell 3.)

ii. Jul. D. vi. (2.) This Cotton MS. contains another, and distinct Life, which, though containing particulars borrowed from the former, furnishes many that are new and peculiar to itself.

iii. Chron. Lanercost. A short account inserted in this Chronicle, and evidently written by an eyewitness, gives a few particulars not elsewhere found.

iv. Alb. Hist. Can. Albert, Archbishop of Armagh, and afterwards Archbishop of Livonia and Prussia, wrote at the request of the monks of Pontigny, a complete history of the Canonization and Translation of the Saint. Printed in Martene and Durand.

v. In the same place may be found (no doubt copied from the Pontigny volume) the testimonies which were sent in to the Holy See in order to the canonization, the bulls of Innocent iv, &c. More testimonies are given in the Appendix to Hearne's edition of Fordun, and others are in MS. in C.C.C. Library, Oxford.

vi. The miracles, from the Catalogue kept at Pontigny, are also in Martene and Durand. They omit the particulars of all but those that were proved at the canonization. The Fell MS. however supplies this defect, though the later leaves are wanting.

Dr. Gascoygne, in his '*Dictionarium Theologicum*,' (MS. in Lincoln Coll. Library, pt. 2. p. 94,) speaks of a Life written by Albert, archbishop of Livonia. His words are, '*Hoc magister Albertus Livoniæ et Prusciæ Archiepiscopus et apostolicæ sedis legatus, in vita quam scripsit de S. Edmundo archiepiscopo quondam Cantuariensi. Qui S. Edmundus fuit magister artium Oxoniæ, et doctor sacræ theologiæ Parisiis, ut patet in libro vitæ ipsius S. Edmundi.*' It might be supposed that he meant the history of the canonization by this Albertus, but that the words he quotes do not occur in that. Nothing else is known of this Life, nor of that which Leland and others attribute to Robert Rich, the brother of S. Edmund. There does not seem any foundation for the assertion of A. Butler that this Robert is the author of the Life Jul. D. vi. (2.)



THE LIFE OF  
**S. Edmund.**

---

CHAPTER I.

EDMUND IN THE SCHOOLS.

THE little town of Abingdon, in Berkshire, was chiefly remarkable in former times for one of the largest and most substantial Benedictine Abbeys in the kingdom, and for the remains of a Saxon palace which had been the occasional residence of the Kings of Wessex or Mercia. It is situated in a rich and level plain at the junction of the Ock with the Thames, and in those days was just on the skirts of an extensive forest of native oak, which had covered, ever since the days of the Romans, the six miles of hilly ground which separated it from Oxford. Thus the two great Abbeys of Abingdon and Osney stood like two beacon towers at either extremity of the gloomy, tangled, and in parts swampy forest, of which the traveller who now ascends the valley of the Thames to Oxford yet perceives a scanty relic, under the name of Bagley Wood.

In this town, towards the close of the twelfth century, was born the last of the great English Saints, Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury 1234-1240. He

was not indeed the last who in England has lived a saintly life, nor even the last who has been inscribed in the canon of the blessed ; but he was the last the fame of whose holiness filled Christendom, or even extended at all beyond the limits of his native country. Oh that it might please God to restore, in this our day and generation, the race which has so long failed among us !

He is known among writers of hagiology as Edmund of Pontigny, but the surname of his family was Rich ; the epithet, " The Rich," having become applicable to his ancestors as a distinction among their fellow-townsmen. He, however, signed himself always Edmund of Abingdon,<sup>1</sup> and is accordingly so called by the historians, following the ordinary custom of ecclesiastics of denoting themselves from the place of their birth. His whole family was one devout beyond the ordinary measure, and dedicated to God's service. His father, Edward,<sup>2</sup> some time before his death, with the consent of his wife, taking his leave of the world, retired to the neighbouring Abbey of Ensham.<sup>3</sup> This holy practice was quite common in those days. Not only disappointment or failure in the world, sickness, or other special warning coming home to the soul, drew men to the religious life, but after a certain age, after having toiled in their vocation, and having discharged the duties of active life, after the burden and heat of the day, they longed for repose, for time to prepare and dress the soul for her last journey. Instead of getting enamoured of life, and clinging more closely to it as it ebbs, trembling before the gradual

<sup>1</sup> See a charter in Dugdale, M. A. vol. i. 960 ; and also Dodsworth's Hist. of Salisbury, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> According to others, Reynald.

<sup>3</sup> Evesham, ap. M. and D.

inroads upon its vigour, the heavenly soul longingly anticipates the period of decline as one of peace, when temptation will be weaker. Like Isaac, it retires in the evening to meditate in the field. Thus, the monasteries were not only seminaries of Christian virtue for the young and enthusiastic who burned to devote their whole lives to God, but a refuge and shelter for the aged, who had learned from experience the vanity of life,—a state of recollection intermediate between this world and the next.

Of Edmund's three brothers, one followed his father into the monastery of Ensham; another, Nicholas, entered that of Boxley, in Kent;<sup>4</sup> and the third, Robert, was the constant companion of the Saint. Two sisters, as we shall see, afterwards became nuns. But the mother, to whom God vouchsafed this holy progeny, was herself a Saint, and worthy to be the mother of a Saint. Though, for the sake of her children, Mabel continued to live in the world, her life was one of religious austerity, serving God with fastings and prayers night and day. She attended almost always at the midnight hours in the neighbouring abbey. Above all, bearing in mind what Scripture says, that "She which liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," she had imposed upon herself the perpetual wearing of sack-cloth next her skin. And to ensure that its rough surface should be always in contact with her body, she laced over it a belt, or stays of iron, which kept it tight around her. Using thus material weapons in this her spiritual combat, in which she was at once victor and vanquished. How many thousands of women put their bodies to as great torment for the sake of a slim waist

<sup>4</sup> Cotton MS. Jul. D. vi. (2.)

or an elegant appearance during a few years of their youth ! This is no fable, for to those of Mabel's own age, more familiar than we with such mortifications, it appeared wonderful. And in memory thereof, the instrument itself, taken from her body at death, was carefully preserved, and gilt over, and so handed down for three hundred years in the family of a citizen of Oxford, by name Dagvyle. He left his property to Lincoln College in that University, and this relic was specially bequeathed to the Church of All Saints, under the name of "The Long Pendant Gyrdle," to be attached to a statue of S. Edmund in that church, so late as the reign of Henry the Seventh. And in such reverence was Mabel's memory held that they esteemed themselves fortunate who could procure a portion of her clothes ; and the chapel adjoining the abbey in which she was buried, though in fact dedicated to the Holy Cross, always went by the name of the Chapel of S. Edmund's mother.<sup>5</sup>

A phenomenon attending his birth was remembered and looked on as an omen of the future purity of the Saint. The new-born infant came forth from the womb without stain or spot, those outward emblems of the inward defilement of original sin with which all the children of Adam are brought into the world. The child lay from the morning till the evening of the day on which its birth took place without motion or sign of life. The midwives thought it dead, and would have had it buried, but the mother resisted this. At her entreaty the babe was baptized, and life and respiration insensibly appeared.

Many illustrious men have told us that their eminence was due entirely to the fostering hand of a

<sup>5</sup> A. Wood, Hist. and Antiq. ii. 9, from the City Records.

mother. There is perhaps no contact between minds so close, no power of moulding so great as that possessed by a mother over the infant years of her son. A mighty influence for good or for evil. How is this most precious of the privileges of maternity abused when it is used to kindle ambition, and to point the energies of the boy to success in life as his end! And if the man who, after years of toil, has climbed the steeps of fame or power, can look back with gratitude and fondness to her who gave the first impulse, who encouraged his childish aspirations to become "a great man," setting before his eager imagination, in all their glowing colours, the examples of the world's heroes, what tenderness and love may we not suppose the matured Saint to feel towards a mother who, instead of thus employing her power in aid of the world, the flesh, and the devil—too powerful tempters of themselves—cherished in him only the spirit of self-denial and self-conquest, who first set before him the humility of his Saviour, the austerity of the Saints, the constancy of martyrs!

Thus she inured him betimes to abstinence. What increases the difficulty and danger to the constitution of the discipline of fasting is to have been used in youth to a full and rich diet. On the other hand, those who begin the practice early have no such additional obstacle to encounter, and will without effort sustain an abstinence that costs another much. This may partly help us to understand the accounts we read quite commonly of the wonderful fasts of religious men of old. The good Mabel accordingly taught him, as soon as ever he was capable of understanding the meaning of the act, to fast every Friday on bread and water. She did this not severely by compulsion, but gently, giving him little toys to induce him to do it of his own accord.

It has often happened to pious mothers that their care and anxiety has been after all, or seemed to be, in vain, and the world has come in and carried off the child they had devoted to God. In such case they have, notwithstanding, their reward. But it was not so with the young Edmund. In him was fulfilled the promise : "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." His mother declared before her death that she had never had cause to reprove anything that he did. As he grew up to years of discretion, he followed by free choice the way in which he had been led as a child. His study was only how to make sacrifices well-pleasing to God. He shunned the sports and amusements competent to his years, and frequented rather the churches. He would dedicate to God not a part only of his life, but the whole of it, its best part, the bud and promise of his youth. How hard does not this seem to most, even of the innocent and well-disposed young. There are those who have gained the mastery over passion, and who have not sold themselves as slaves to that hard task-master, ambition, in whom generous enthusiasm still lives unclouded by vice, and uneradicated by selfish aims. Yet even these—and there are not many such—though they are of the very highest order of the natural man, are very far from that spirit of entire surrender which, with the whole strength of the youthful will, dedicates every thought, word, and action, every future moment of its existence, to God. They have escaped shipwreck at the very outset of their course, from the more obvious perils of sin ; but life is so fresh and joyous ; liberty of action and motion is so dear ; the cup of youth though pure is so bright and sparkling, nay, the more delicious because it is felt to

be innocent, that we are tempted to think it a thankless rejection of God's best gifts to throw all this away ; and bury ourselves in the gloomy walls of a monastery, or tie ourselves down to a cheerless and monotonous life of prayer and devotion. Such a life is at once felt to be congenial to those that are broken by sickness, or bowed by sorrow, disappointment, or loss of friends. But it seems a contradiction of nature when health, youth, and vigour, waste themselves upon it. Some Saints have felt this struggle within them, and have gained the victory. It is a temptation which only the virtuous and high-minded can experience. But there are others who seem raised even above this, who with the same ardour and impulse, with all the energy of young life, burn to devote to an ascetic career all these faculties with the same enthusiasm that others do to essay them in the open world. It is hard for us even to conceive the exalted virtue of such souls, who thus anticipate the usual result of a long and painful noviciate. They seem as though they could dispense with the cloister, and are at once what the rule only aims at producing.

It was thus with young Edmund. His only solicitude was that no precious time should be lost, but that every thought and act might tend towards his one end, that of glorifying God in all his powers. When about twelve years old, his mother sent him and his brother to the schools in Oxford. And here his chief desire was to preserve his body in purity, spotless, and inviolate. He sought spiritual counsel in this matter from a certain Priest, famed for his wisdom and discretion, to whom his mother had given him in charge. Under his guidance he resolved to make a private vow of perpetual continence before God, and the ever Virgin

Mother. Entering a church,\* accordingly, he knelt before an image of Our Lady, and earnestly prayed for succour and strength to keep his vow. Following the suggestion of boyish fancy, he ratified his vow by a little ceremony. Having two rings made with the words of the Angel, Ave Maria, &c., upon them, one of which placing on the finger of the Image, the other on his own, he thus espoused himself to the Blessed Virgin. This youthful action he kept from the knowledge of all ; though within himself he never ceased to keep up the remembrance of it. But near the end of his life, when he had ceased to fear the demon that lurketh in the noon-day, he related it to his friends, and requested that it might be written down for the benefit of others. In attestation of it the very ring with the inscription was noted on his finger at his burial ; and the image was pointed out as an object of curiosity in the University.<sup>6</sup> His biographers mention instances in which his resolution was put to trial ; when the grace of God, and the aid of the Blessed Virgin, saved him ; and it was confidently attested by those who knew him all his life, and by all his confessors, that he preserved purity of body inviolate till the day of his death.

His progress in study seemed, at one time, likely to be put a stop to by a severe pain in the head, which never left him. His mother, who no doubt remembered how marvellously he had seemed to come to life only on his baptism, suggested that he should now submit to the clerical tonsure. He followed this advice, and suffered himself to be shorn as a clerk. The pain immediately left him, as though it had been extracted

<sup>6</sup> Gloriose Virginis imaginem quam sepe et una cum tota Universitate vidimus. Chron. Lanercost.

\* The Church of St. Thomas.



from his head by a forceps, as he afterwards expressed it to a friend, and never afterwards returned.

Anxious to give her sons the best education that was to be had, Mabel sent Edmund and his brother Robert, while yet young, to Paris. At Oxford they had been close to their home, and she must have had the consolation of seeing them often, but now she was sending them out from home, to part from them perhaps for ever, for a student then did not go backwards and forwards between the university and his own home, but took up his abode altogether in the former for the whole period during which he was to attend the disputations and lectures. She gave them but a scanty purse,<sup>7</sup> commending them to God, "to whom she trusted to provide, and that bountifully for them." This alluded to the way in which scholars were supported. Coming from the poorer classes, their own families could do little for them, but they received alms, and it was considered a special charity to contribute to the maintenance of the poor scholar. This was the origin of fellowships and exhibitions, which were but more permanent charitable benefactions of the same kind, and were only intended, by those who founded them, for such as could not support themselves during their period of study, which might last from ten to fifteen years. It was only gradually that the practice was introduced of holding them for an unlimited time.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it makes a part of the scholar's portrait in Chaucer, that he was supported by alms:—

But all be that he was a philosopre  
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,

---

<sup>7</sup> *Quandam pecuniæ summam modico duraturam tempore, B.*

<sup>8</sup> Hüber on Univ. i. 177.

But all that he might of his frendes hente  
 On bokes and on lerning he it spente,  
 And besily gan for the soules praie  
 Of them that gave him wherewith to scolaie.<sup>9</sup>

Much more anxious than to provide even for their necessary bodily wants, was she to guard their souls against the dangers to which they would be more especially exposed in Paris.<sup>1</sup> She gave them each a sackcloth shirt, enjoining them to wear it next their skin twice or thrice in the week ; this practice would be at once a penance for past sin, a discipline of virtue and fortification against temptation, and a memento that could not be got rid of, that the joys of life and the indulgence of the flesh were not for them ; and such was her persuasion, from her own experience, of the benefits of the practice, that in sending her saintly son, from time to time, fresh supplies of linen, she never omitted to include a hair shirt among them.<sup>2</sup>

While yet at Paris, he was summoned home to witness the holy death of his mother, and to receive a last charge at her hands. She had given him her blessing with the utmost tenderness,<sup>3</sup> when he reminded her of his brothers who were absent. "Have I not blessed you, my son?" she asked ; "in that blessing be assured that all your brothers are partakers." For she had a sure presentiment of the eminence of sanctity to which this son would hereafter attain. This was

<sup>9</sup> And so late as in Luther's time, in Germany poor scholars went from door to door crying ' panem propter Deum.'—Luther's Letters.

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Stephen Langton, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> The old writers of chivalrous romance are fond of this trait of the great Sir Percival, that he would never abandon the good hempen shirt his mother made for him. *Mores Cath.* i. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Affectuosissime edita.*

grounded not only on observation of his pure and gentle behaviour, but on a dream, in which she had seen him with a crown of thorns on his head, from which bright flowers shot up into the sky. So she had ever distinguished him by her love above the rest of her children, and she now gave them her blessing through him, and committed to him especially his two sisters, Margaret and Alice, whom she desired, as soon as opportunity might offer, that he would enter in some monastery.

There was a practice common at the time, for convents to receive money with the novices when they entered. It was a bad practice, and had been over and over again prohibited by the Councils. But yet it seemed so fair that everyone should contribute something to the support of the house in which they were to be maintained, that it continued, though disapproved. In compliance with this practice, Mabel had apportioned a sum to go with her daughters. But Edmund would by no means consent to this. Under whatever guise,—as, for example, when it was said to be taken to provide the dress of the new-comer,<sup>4</sup>—he considered it simoniacal. The legal and canonical definitions of simony might be evaded, it is true, but the thing remained the same. But none of the abbeys to which he applied would admit on these terms. It was so easy to mistake his motive. It might be penuriousness, and his family was known not to be poor. Or, if they did not suspect him of avarice, they might think it a very unnecessary scruple on his part. It was a fancy peculiar to himself. The canons were equally known to others, who did not, however, press

<sup>4</sup> *Prætextu vestimentorum ultra justum pretium.* *Constit. Steph. Langton, c. 35.*

them thus literally, or think that they forbade a free gift being offered to the house by the novice. There was the common practice of the time on one hand, and the private opinion (it seemed nothing more) of a young clerk of the university on the other. So all the abbesses refused him. But Edmund would not yield or give up his search in despair. And he succeeded unexpectedly. As he entered the Benedictine nunnery of Catesby, between Banbury and Daventry, in Northamptonshire, before he had uttered a word respecting his business, the Prioress saluted him by name, and, saying she knew the purpose for which he was come, prayed that he would, without delay, send his sisters to her. This Prioress shared the spirit of S. Theresa, who writes to Father Dominic Bagnez, "Be assured, father, that it is an occasion of the greatest joy to me, whenever I receive sisters who bring nothing with them to the convent, whom I receive for the love of God; I wish I might receive them all in this manner." Thus this seemed the asylum provided for them by God's providence; a humble house, but that was what S. Edmund sought; not as "many, who preferred those religious houses which are richly founded and seem to hold a rank in the world, a thing very absurd in persons who renounce the world and profess a state of abjection and poverty."<sup>5</sup> Here they, therefore, embraced the religious life, and became successively prioresses, living endued with saintly virtues, which, after death, were evidenced by miracles.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Alban Butler.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. Par. The nuns of Catesby continued to maintain to the last an edifying holiness. The visitors at the dissolution are not very good evidence on such a subject, but they say, "The house of Catesby we founde in verry perfett order, the prioress a sure, wyse, discrete,

Edmund did not follow their example, feeling perhaps that his vocation lay in the schools. Yet he was a frequent guest in monasteries, yet living, when he was so, not as a guest, but as one of the brotherhood. He spent a twelvemonth or more at this time in the Priory of Merton, in Surrey. And long afterwards he returned here again, "going in and out among them as though he were one of the Sons of that Church."<sup>7</sup> The Cistercians became attached to him, and little opportunity as their rule allowed them for talking, they delighted in his conversation and admired his devotion.<sup>8</sup>

After he had passed the competent time in the study of arts, he became a master himself, that is, he opened a school and taught. We cannot determine how much of his time thus occupied was spent at Paris and at Oxford respectively, but it was divided between the two places. So far from allowing this new duty to interfere with the devotions he had hitherto used, it only impelled him to add to them. Accordingly, though it was not usual for the teachers in arts, who were not yet in holy orders or beneficed, so to do, he made it a rule to hear mass and to say the canonical hours every day

and very religious woman, with ix nunnys under her obedyence, as relygious and devout, and wyth as good obedyence, as we have tyme paste seen, or belyke shall see. The seid house standyth in such a quarter, much to the releff of the kyng's people, and his grace's pore subjects, their likewyse mo relieved as by the reporte of divers worshyppfull nere thereunto adjoyning as of all other yt ys to us openly declared; wherefore yf yt shuld please the kyng's highnesse to have eny remorse that eny such relygous house shall stande, we thynk his grace cannot appoynt eny house more mete to shew hys most gracious charitie and pitey over than one the said house of Catesby."  
—ap. Dugdale, M.A. iv. 638.

<sup>7</sup> Jul. D. vi. (2.)

<sup>8</sup> Quidam fratrum in ipsius valde delectabantur colloquiis. Id.

before he commenced his lectures. For the better facility of so doing, he built in the parish in which he happened to lodge a small chapel, which he frequented for this purpose. The means of doing this were provided for him by his patrimonial estate, which had come into his sole hands. But he seems to have soon disburthened himself of this, for we find him making over his tenements in the town of Abingdon to the Hospital of S. John, outside the east gate of Oxford.<sup>9</sup> To this practice of saying the canonical hours he brought many of the students by the influence of his example.

And as he did not suffer study to encroach upon devotion, so neither did he find it incompatible with the performance of works of mercy of the most laborious and harassing kind. An instance of this is furnished by his behaviour to a sick pupil. Hearing that he was poor and in want, he had him brought to his own lodgings, and for five weeks that he kept his bed the saint lay on a couch by his side, attending him night and day, not content merely to provide for him what he stood in need of, but rendering him with his own hands the most menial offices. And every morning after a night of this labour and fatigue, he went forth as usual to the disputation.

Indeed, he seemed hardly at any time to allow himself the repose of entire sleep. For though he had in his chamber a bed furnished in the usual manner,<sup>1</sup> yet he did not sleep in it, but lay on a bench at the foot of it, or else on the ground. But ascetic habits, like self-indulgent ones, grow upon a man. And in time he

<sup>9</sup> A. Wood. Hist. Antiq. ii. p. 9.

<sup>1</sup> Satis honeste stratum.—B.

began to find the recumbent posture too great a luxury. So he would take his rest at night, sitting upright wrapt in his scapular, or at most in a cloak. And this practice, those who were intimate with him believed,—for so secret did he keep his austerities, that it could not be ascertained with certainty—that he had observed for the last thirty years or upwards of his life. This, coupled with the most vigorous abstinence, made his friends fear for his head. They thought human strength could not support so much, and that he would either die under the discipline or lose his senses.<sup>2</sup>

He rose at midnight to matins, which he attended, when in Paris, at the church of S. Mery. He never returned to his couch, even such as it was, after he had once risen, but spent the time which remained till daylight in prayer, weeping and groaning before the altar of the blessed Virgin in the same church, and then betook himself to the schools with the rest. In short, he could never be said to sleep; but if nature was sometimes overcome during his long vigils, he would lean his head against the wall and obtain a few moments of repose as he sat or knelt. Thus was always applicable to his rest, what one once said of himself when asked if he was sleeping, ‘Non dormio sed succumbo.’

Thus he passed six years in teaching in arts. He was probably still young, for it was usual for mere boys to graduate in arts,<sup>3</sup> when he was called to the study of theology, by a vision which has become, perhaps, the most well-known incident in his life. He

*Credebant quod capitis esset incursum insaniam.*—B.

<sup>3</sup> About this time Cardinal Robert, Legate in France, in his regulations for the university, forbade any one from reading in arts before twelve years of age. Bulæus, iii. 81.

was engaged in a course of mathematics, and dreamed that his mother appeared, and asked, pointing to the diagrams which lay before him, "Son, what figures be these thou art so intent on? Henceforth, quit them, and give thyself to such as these," drawing in his right hand three circles, which she marked with the names of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity. For as, even in the most devout, the intellect needs previous training before it can venture on theology as a science, so there is always danger lest it should rest on subjects that are but preliminary, and mistake for the support and occupation of the intellect that which a wise Christian education assigned only for its discipline. From this danger Edmund was preserved by the interference of her who had guided him all along. Whatever was the nature of the vision, he felt it a divine call, and, from this time, applied himself to the study of theology exclusively. Such was his ardour, that the days seemed to him too few and too short, and he continued in study almost the whole night through. Yet it was not that intellectual ardour of which the end is, after all, but self, but that love of divine knowledge which leads to the abnegation of self. Of this he gave a notable instance. For at this very time, when he seemed to have most need of them, he did not hesitate to part with his books, that he might have wherewith to relieve some scholars who were in want. His whole library was, indeed, but the Old Testament with the Gloss and the Decretals. For when the Archbishop of York, who had heard of his application to theology, and probably of his want of books, had offered to have a Bible written out for his use, he refused, fearing that some monastery would have to be burdened with the expense and the labour of



transcription. Yet this was not from setting little value on his books. For once, on a journey between Paris and England, he had committed his Bible to the charge of one of his companions, who lost it. On learning the loss he had thus sustained through carelessness, Edmund was moved even to anger. This, he used to say, was the sole occasion in his whole life on which he was overcome by that passion.<sup>4</sup>

After some years spent in the study of theology, he proceeded to the degree of doctor, at the entreaty of his friends. And this degree then implied actual teaching, as the title by which it is still denoted in universities implies, S.T.P., Professor of Sacred Theology. And S. Edmund's teaching was such as sought the spiritual edification of his hearers, and not their intellectual advantage only. Many instances are related of its effects on the better disposed. Men of great station, who would sometimes come to hear him lecture, were so affected by his words, that they would shut up their note-books, being affected even to tears. Some possessed of rich benefices resigned them, and entered into religion, for the purpose of pursuing after that wisdom of which his words had given them, as it were, a glimpse, "preferring her before sceptres and thrones, and esteeming riches nothing in comparison of her."<sup>5</sup> One night he saw in a dream a large fire kindled in his schools, out of which were drawn seven burning torches. The vision had its fulfilment on the morrow. While he was lecturing, Stephen of Lexington, an Abbot of the Cistercian Order, entered his schools, and, at the conclusion of

<sup>4</sup> Tunc semel, nec amplius toto tempore vitæ suæ. B.

<sup>5</sup> Wisd. of Sol. vii. 8.

the lecture, seven of his scholars followed the Abbot into his monastery at Quar, in the Isle of Wight. "The fire of the Divine word which the Holy Spirit poured among them through the mouth of the lecturer, mightily inflamed their hearts to the love of poverty and forgetfulness of the world." One of these seven, by name Stephen, afterwards became Abbot of Clairvaux.

His countenance was significant of the heavenly wisdom with which he was gifted, being noted for a subtle and joyous grace, and even a beauty peculiar to itself.<sup>6</sup> It was as though the splendour of divine love, which had prepared for itself an abode in his breast, made the casket which contained it transparent, giving light to those around. Another vision which he had shewed from what source he sought this illumination. One day he had mounted the chair from which he was to hold his disputation, and was revolving the subject in his mind before commencing. The question for the day was on the Trinity. While he awaited the arrival of the rest of his pupils, he was overtaken by sleep for a moment; during which he saw, in a dream, the Holy Spirit, in the shape of a dove, fly towards him and place in his mouth of the blessed body of Christ. On rousing himself, he disputed on the Blessed Trinity with such surprising subtlety, depth, and fervour, as almost to exceed the power of the human intellect, so that it seemed to his hearers they heard an angel, rather than a man, so did he open to them the depths of that unfathomable mystery.

Nor was he less powerful in his discourses "ad popu-

<sup>6</sup> *Præ cæteris disputantium colorata.*

lum," than in the schools.<sup>7</sup> He had an eloquence in his preaching which wrought even on the minds of the coldest. It was usual with him in preaching to hold in his hand a crucifix, on which he would look from time to time, now with tears, now with smiles. When asked the reason of this diversity, he said, he wept to think that among so many hearers there should be so few doers of the word; but that he smiled again when he recollected the benefits which that Cross had brought to the world. An instance of the effects of his preaching is on record in the case of a distinguished person. This was William Earl of Salisbury, the half-brother of the late king (John). He had led the usual life of a baron, and had his share in the civil wars and commotions of that reign. And he looked on religion and its ordinances with the same contempt as the rest of the knights who were about that prince. Of course he never confessed, or approached the holy altar. His last expedition had been into Gascony in the service of the young king Henry. On his return he was overtaken by a tempest in the Bay of Biscay. After many days and nights tossing to and fro, the earl, and all who were in the ship, despairing of their lives, threw all the treasure and jewels into the sea, that as he came naked into this world, so he might pass out of it despoiled of all earthly ornament. In this his utmost despair, a waxen light of great size, and shining with great splendour, was seen by all in the ship, on the summit of the mast, and near it a woman of exquisite beauty, protecting that bright light from the fury of the wind and rain.<sup>8</sup> This deliverance

<sup>7</sup> *Assiduis prædicationibus quibus plurimum vacabat, plures ad Dominum attrahebat.* Trivet. Annal.

<sup>8</sup> Matt. Par.

no doubt had an effect on him. And after his return to Salisbury he was persuaded by Ella, his countess, to listen to Edmund. At his first interview the mere sight of the holy man's face softened his brute's nature.<sup>9</sup> Turning to Ella, he said, "I believe verily that this is a man of God." He confessed in Edmund's presence to a hermit, and afterwards received with fitting devotion the Body of Christ. Nor was this a temporary reformation. He died shortly after this in great penitence. Being on his deathbed, in his Castle of Salisbury, he caused the bishop, Richard Poor, to come to him, that he might minister to him in confession and the last rites. When the bishop entered his chamber, bearing the Body of Christ, the earl was lying on his bed in a high fever; indeed it was thought he had been poisoned. But he exerted all his remaining strength to throw himself from his bed; and tying a cord round his neck, in token of humility, prostrated himself weeping upon the floor, and crying out that he was a traitor to the Most High; nor would he be raised up till he had made his confession and received the Holy Sacrament. And so having for some days persevered in acts of penitence, he yielded up his soul to his Redeemer.<sup>1</sup>

At another time a certain prostitute proposed to her companions, for sport, "to go and hear this canting fellow, and see what he is like."<sup>2</sup> She went, and was converted from her wicked life by his words.

All this intellectual labour in teaching and preaching was supported, not so much by the body, and by bodily refreshments, as by the soul energizing almost without the

<sup>9</sup> *Ad ejus aspectum bestialis ejus animus humanior est effectus.*

<sup>1</sup> *Matt. Par.*

<sup>2</sup> *Eamus ad papalardum illum et eum cominus videamus.*

body. The streams of instruction that flowed from his mouth were fed not by the hard intellectual labour of a few hours, but by the perpetual meditation of the Divine nature in which his whole soul was occupied. It has been said<sup>3</sup> that invention in science, or success in business, are only attainable at the price of "ever thinking of it." But the most ardent in the pursuit of science or gain cannot be so unceasingly occupied with their subject as the Saint with his. For all the varied acts of which a religious life consists, though they seem diverse and distinct, yet are but so many expressions of the one thought ever present,—one, yet infinite. Thus, whether studying, teaching, preaching, meditating, or praying, Edmund's mind circled around God, and his only meat seemed to be to do the will of Him that sent him. Sleep he seemed to regard as an enemy that would be ever robbing him of some moments of spiritual joy. Nor was his abstinence less beyond the ordinary measure of man. He seemed to regard abstinence as a virtue which, like chastity, would be marred by one single deviation, and so he had kept it himself from his childhood unspotted. None who shared his meals could ever recollect that he had eaten such an amount as is ordinarily sufficient to satisfy appetite.<sup>4</sup> The moral virtue of temperance both in food and drink is requisite, under ordinary circumstances, for high achievements in the world. This when exalted to the saintly degree becomes abstinence, and seems, if we may judge from the lives of all the Saints, to be an equally

<sup>3</sup> By Newton.

<sup>4</sup> *Nunquam potuerunt perpendere eum ad communem hominum satietatem comedisse.* B. The same is said of S. Godfrey, Bishop of Amiens. *Surius in vitâ.*

indispensable element of spiritual perfection. Every Friday throughout the year, as we have said, he tasted nothing but bread and water. Often he would forego the water, till the want of liquid parched his mouth and lips so that they cracked<sup>5</sup> like the earth in drought, piteous to look upon. The physicians, according to the notions of the time, ascribed to this poverty of humours the early loss of his hair and beard. To the prescribed days of abstinence he added a practice of his own, of abstaining from flesh Mondays and Wednesdays, from the Epiphany to Lent. He did the same on the days on which he said mass and the day preceding. So that sometimes, out of Lent, he would not taste flesh for a whole month together. He very rarely ate more than once in the day, and only when induced by the presence of friends. He ever avoided dainty viands, and never tasted seasoned dishes, spices, or sauces. He never liked to be asked, beforehand of what his meal should consist, nor would taste of any dish commended in his presence.

Being continually in prayer, he adopted laborious postures, and those of three degrees. First, he knelt, or rather was continually rising, and falling on his knees, as it were knocking at the gate of heaven. This always with the bare knee on the ground, so that one of them was ever wounded and bleeding, while the other was covered with a protuberance of hard callous flesh. When he had no longer the strength to rise, he continued on his knees, but prostrating his whole body, at intervals, on the ground. And lastly, when too much exhausted to continue this motion, he was fain to con-

<sup>5</sup> For 'fessa,' we should read 'fissa,' in B. ap. Mart. and D. iii. p. 1793.

tent himself with bowing his head repeatedly. Every day he worshipped every member of Christ crucified from the head to the feet, saying as his eye rested on each, *Adoramus te, Christe*. And every day he said, in addition to the canonical hours, those of the Holy Ghost, and of the Blessed Virgin, adding to these the Office of the Dead.

So great was his contempt for money at this time, that what he received from his pupils he used to place in the window, and sprinkling it with dust would say : "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Sometimes his friends would take it away in jest, or it would be pilfered, without his inquiring after it.

His dress was of the ordinary grey cloth,<sup>6</sup> a long robe or gown reaching to his feet like the frock of a monk. He would avoid in this respect unbecoming meanness as well as expense, and thought that the estate of a clerk required a fitting appearance.<sup>7</sup> When he had worn them sufficiently long, he bestowed them on religious women, widows, or virgins under a vow. Caps or gloves, then marks of wealth and luxury, he never used. He did not much indulge in the use of the bath, thinking purity of mind was sufficient. He would not listen to the harp, and instruments of music by which the sense of hearing is gratified. Yet, when afterwards he had a table of his own, he admitted the minstrels<sup>8</sup> to it, looking on them as poor and in need, though they were ministers of folly.

<sup>6</sup> 'Grisius,' which Surius renders 'colore cinericio.'

<sup>7</sup> *Nec abjecta plurimum sed nec plurimum pretiosa, prout clericalis requirebat honestas.*

<sup>8</sup> *Histriones.*

## CHAPTER II.

## EDMUND AT SALISBURY.

EDMUND had had many benefices offered him, and some he had accepted. But he never would hold more than one at a time, and on that he would always reside. And ever and anon the love of his old life of study would prevail; he would unexpectedly resign his preferment, and betake himself again to his old abode and occupation in the University.<sup>1</sup> But he was now going to change permanently, not indeed his mode of life, but his position, and finally to quit the schools. His friends were ever entreating him to accept some benefice that would enable him to devote himself to preaching in an unrestricted sphere. He accepted from Bishop Poor the Treasurership in the Church of Salisbury, in which diocese his native place Abingdon was situated. This was not long before the Dedication of the new Cathedral which that Bishop had built. This took place on the feast of S. Michael, 1225, and was attended with great solemnity. The Legate Otho was there, and an abundance of bishops, barons, and knights. Stephen Langton, the Archbishop, preached to the people on the occasion.

From this preferment Edmund sought not the means

<sup>1</sup> Quotiens lectionibus vacare disposuit, solebat nullius expectato consilio resignare.



of luxury or idleness, but a supply of more abundant works of mercy. In these, and in the exercise of hospitality, he was liberal to extravagance. He desired that what was his should be regarded as the common property of the needy. None ever went empty from his doors, but received somewhat, less or more, as seemed to be required by the case ; sometimes bread, sometimes corn, or at the least peas and beans, which he ordered to be boiled, and which, in a time of scarcity, were found very acceptable by the poor. A large empty dish was placed before him at meal-time, and into this he put aside a large share of the portion served up to himself. This was afterwards carried by his almoner to some sick person. If there was no such person to whom he could send it, he would set it with his own hands before pilgrims or other poor travellers whom he might happen to be lodging at the time, serving them himself also with drink sufficient. Besides this, every day he furnished food and clothing to those who stood in need of it, desiring thus to make ready for himself ministers and intercessors in heaven.

And this was not merely a liberal alms-giving out of an abundant, or out of a well-regulated, income. It was a fixed contempt for money, and what money procures. He never would hear any statement of his accounts. He considered it unbefitting his character to enter his store-houses or domestic offices.<sup>2</sup> Money he would not touch, or so much as look upon, save that which with his own hand he distributed to those who had need. It was always with reluctance that he attended the chapters that were held on business. He even solicited and obtained from the Holy See, special

<sup>2</sup> *Inconveniens hoc esse judicans sui nominis honestati.*

letters of exemption from attendance on all suits and causes, such as were tried in the chapter and manorial courts. A most inefficient treasurer he must have been. And sometimes the canons may have wished that brother Edmund had been such a one as Abbot Sampson of S. Edmund's, who had daily laid before him the kalendar or account-book of the abbey. This contained a register of all the customs, rents, receptions, and payments of the Abbey. And the Abbot, who was one who favoured the active rather than the contemplative life, and liked good officers better than good monks, made this volume part of his daily study, "beholding in it, as in a mirror, the reflection of his own integrity."<sup>3</sup> So that by the time he had been four years abbot, no one could have deceived him in the value of a penny as to the revenues of the church of S. Edmund the King.<sup>4</sup> But though Edmund, after a ten years' Treasurership, most likely could not have done this for the Church of Salisbury, yet his brother canons knew his value, and were loth to lose him when the time came. It was a saying of the dean, that Edmund was not so much the treasurer as the treasure of their church.

And, indeed, though the Saints are our examples, yet there are some of their actions which are rather for our admiration than our imitation. Or to speak more properly, ordinary Christians who should take up one or more isolated practices recorded of great Saints, would, in all probability, be led into great error. It is the whole character which gives such practices their

<sup>3</sup> *Tanquam ibi consideraret vultum probitatis suæ in speculo.* *Joc. de Brakelond*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Non erat qui posset eum decipere ad valentiam unius denarii.* *Id.*

proper place and fitness. The virtues of Saints are not moral virtues, or rather, they are the moral virtues exalted to a heroic degree. Moral excellence is not contradicted indeed, but surpassed in their lives. As Augustine shews<sup>5</sup> that the four cardinal virtues are changed in the blessed in heaven, prudence into contemplation ; fortitude into firm adhesion to God ; temperance into rightly-measured affection ; justice into rectitude of heart.

Edmund's defence of himself in this matter, took a lower and a practically intelligible ground. When Stephen of Lexinton one day remonstrated with him on the bad economy of his household, he answered :—"It is common with the vulgar to taunt churchmen with avarice ; I desire to give no occasion by my conduct for this to be said of me. Also, it is my wish to keep my table ever open to persons of the king's court and other secular persons, that I may thus have the opportunity of gaining them to God."

But with such ideas of the employment of money, we need not wonder that before the first half of the year was expired, he had exhausted his stores of provision, and his money-chest. At best the revenues of the chapter were small at that time, for all the canons had bound themselves to contribute for seven years to the utmost of their ability out of their prebendal estates to the new fabric. When this was the case, Edmund was obliged by his poverty to withdraw into some monastery for the remaining six months of the year. Sometimes this was Merton, more often one in the neighbourhood of Salisbury. The Abbey of Stanley was one he often selected, where his friend Stephen of Lexinton was now

<sup>5</sup> De Musica, vi. 16.

abbot. It was a Cistercian house in the northern part of the county, not far from Chippenham. It was called from its foundress, Matilda, the Empress's Stanley.<sup>6</sup>

In such sojourns, in truth, he sought less the supply of his necessities, which were indeed few, as the retirement of the cloister and the society of the religious. He conformed in every thing to their rule. He attended all the divine offices in the church of the monastery, and that with a promptness and joy which warmed the zeal even of the professed religious. At matins, which were at midnight, he would be the first in the church, and the last to quit it. It was remembered of him in one monastery, which was honoured by entertaining him on one of these occasions, that on the feast of the Blessed Virgin he would take his station before an altar, and continue through the whole of the long Cistercian nocturns standing immoveable in one position.<sup>7</sup> So the good looked upon him as a perfect exemplar of religion,<sup>8</sup> and the remiss were stimulated by shame, that one wearing the secular habit should so much surpass them. "In his mouth was never aught but peace, purity, piety, charity; in his heart dwelt nought save only Christ the source of all these, who thus through him ministered to many the plenteous fruits of love, peace, joy, long-suffering, faith and chastity."<sup>9</sup>

It was from no love of ease or indolence that he thus shunned secular affairs. When he afterwards became archbishop, and they became absolutely necessary, and higher interests were involved than the saving of a few

<sup>6</sup> Bowles, Hist. of Bremhill, p. 102. Not a vestige of it is now remaining.

<sup>7</sup> Quamdiu monachorum satis prolixæ durabant vigiliæ. B.

<sup>8</sup> Forma totius honestatis et religionis. B.

<sup>9</sup> Jul. D. vi. (1.)

pounds, he was active enough ; going as ambassador to Llewellyn, prince of Wales, reconciling feuds between nobles, and undertaking a journey to Rome to plead his own cause against the earl of Arundel. While his conduct now shews the spirit in which he did all this, as forced upon him for the good of others, while his heart and thoughts were elsewhere, in his oratory or his books. His devotion to sacred study was as great now as when he was lecturing every day. And he was not a studious man after the manner of many, surrounded by books, living amid an exciting variety of subjects and authors, commentators, philosophers, canonists, and all the paraphernalia of the library. "His delight was in the law of the Lord, and in his law did he meditate day and night." The Holy Scriptures alone sufficed him. The Bible glossed, *i. e.*, with the Church's interpretation, that help which the Holy Spirit has provided for those who would penetrate into its hidden meaning. The time diverted from this study by meals, sleep, or travelling, he considered lost. The attendant of his chamber was ordered to have a light ready at any time of night that he might wish to rise.<sup>1</sup> When he disposed himself to read, on opening the book, he always kissed the sacred page. His books were supported on a desk of some height, and immediately under them was set a carving in ivory, representing the Blessed Virgin on a throne surrounded by the mysteries of redemption. "Thus he had before him at once the letter and the thing, what the book expressed in words, the figures represented in ivory ;" and thus reason and imagination combined to fix his mind on the one object of all his meditation, the wonders of the incarnation. In this way

<sup>1</sup> Chron. Lanercost.

it was that S. Philip Benet, when dying, called for "his book," by which he meant his crucifix. So S. Vincent Ferrer always composed his sermons at the foot of a crucifix, both to beg light from Christ crucified, and to draw from that object sentiments to animate his hearers.<sup>2</sup>

Thus prayer succeeded to reading, contemplation to prayer, and reading again to contemplation, in a ceaseless round and interchange. If, indeed, change it can be called, when the object is ever one and the same; these different functions seeming in the Saint's mind to be exalted into one, perhaps a near approach to the beatific vision which is their reward hereafter. "This most sweet vision, which," says abbot Gilbert, in his sermons on Canticles, "the Saints may here enjoy, though not complete as it will be hereafter, yet akin to it; akin to it in quality, not in quantity."

It was while canon of Salisbury that Edmund's services were required in a wider sphere. The fame of his virtues had reached Rome, and the pope, who was just now seeking for such men to employ them in preaching the crusade, sent him, among others, a commission for this purpose. This was most likely in the year 1227, in which there was a great movement towards the Holy Land, sixty thousand men having gone from England alone. The commission contained the customary clause authorizing the preacher to receive support, or stipend, called a procuration, from the rectors of the parishes in which he preached. This Edmund refused to do, having only accepted the prebend in the church of Salisbury that he might be enabled to preach the Gospel without burdening any. The district allotted to him was mainly the central counties of Berks, Oxford, Glou-

<sup>2</sup> A. Butler's Life of S. Vincent.

cester, Worcester, though he seems to have extended his preaching from Somersetshire as far as Hereford. Upon this evangelic journey God began to give him the power of working miracles to illustrate and authenticate his preaching. Some of these are recorded. They are all of that secondary class which have been called ecclesiastical miracles. Not cures or gifts of healing, but wonders. And chiefly serving for the comfort and encouragement of their instrument, many of them being known to him alone. While the greater and more decided class of miracles, such as those wrought by S. Edmund's relics after his death, are blessings and relief to sufferers, and serve to the edification of the faithful in general, and to attest the victory over nature which the spirit had wrought while in the flesh.

At a village called Lemestre,<sup>3</sup> a young man, moved by his exhortations, was advancing to take the cross from the preacher, when a certain woman, who was beloved by him, and by whose seductions he was held captive, seeing she was about to lose him, caught his cloak and gently drew him back. The hand with which she held him was immediately palsied. She cried out straightway to the man of God, and confessed her fault. Edmund demanded if she too was willing to receive the cross from his hand. On her consenting he placed the mark<sup>1</sup> of the cross on her shoulder, and immediately her hand was restored to her. A similar event occurred again at a different place.

Once, in the Rogation time, he was preaching in Oxford, in the churchyard of All Saints, about three o'clock in the afternoon, when a violent shower came on. The people, who were seated on the ground, began

<sup>3</sup> ? Leominster in Herefordshire.

to move off; but Edmund bade them stay, saying he would beg of God that they might continue to listen to His word without interruption. He was silent a few moments in prayer, and then proceeded with his sermon. Meanwhile, torrents of rain were falling all around, so that the neighbouring street ran like a river, but not a drop fell in the churchyard. A very similar thing occurred at another time, when he was preaching in S. John's churchyard under a tree; and the same miracle was repeated again at Crick, at Worcester, and at Gloucester.

Nothing of importance was undertaken in the diocese of Salisbury, without recourse being had to Edmund for counsel and assistance. The pious Countess Ella, whom we have already mentioned, resolved, about this time, to found a monastery, proposing to retire into it herself at no distant period. In her pious foundations, and in all her acts, she used the counsel of Edmund, as long as he remained at Salisbury.<sup>4</sup> "When she had lived seven years in widowhood, after the death of her husband, and had often proposed to found monasteries, to please God, and for the health of her soul and that of her husband, she was directed in visions that she should build a monastery in honour of S. Mary and S. Bernard, in a meadow near Laycock, called in English Snaylesmede, and which was part of her earldom of Sarum. Accordingly, on the 15th of April, 1232, she founded two monasteries in one day; early in the morning that of Laycock, in which holy canonesses should dwell, continually and most devoutly serving God;" and, after nones, that of Hinton,<sup>5</sup> a priory

<sup>4</sup> Book of Laycock ap. Bowles, Hist. of Laycock Abbey.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



of the Carthusian order. Ella was often visited by Edmund when she was at Laycock, which was very near to Stanley, one of his retreats. She was once very sick of a fever when he came to see her, and, on going away, he promised to send her a physician who would cure her at once. He sent a portion of the blood of S. Thomas the Martyr, and she recovered immediately on receiving it. "The cure," says the biographer, "might probably be owing to the virtue of the relic; but Edmund's prophetic foresight of its effect must be esteemed miraculous." On her recovery, the countess would have made him a rich present of jewels. But he would not so much as look on them, still less accept them.

## CHAPTER III.

## EDMUND AT CANTERBURY.

HE was now called by God to a wider sphere. His virtue was no longer to be confined to one diocese, but to be brought out in the face of England, as a city set on a hill, that cannot be hid.

Stephen Langton died in 1228, and was succeeded by Richard Graunt. But he filled the see of Canterbury barely three years, dying in 1232, in Italy, on his way back from Rome. It was a troublesome prerogative this that the monks of Christchurch vindicated to themselves at so much cost, that of electing the archbishop. As far as any advantage to themselves was concerned, they had much better have been without it; for they never could succeed in getting the man they would have wished, if left to their own free will. They never could choose independent either of the king or the court of Rome; and, after innumerable vexations, harassing journeys, first to find the king, then to Rome; after delays, hearings, adjournments, mortifications, and expenses, it became quite a chance what stranger they might have for a bishop at last. Not that, as a body, they have any claim to our respect. They brought many of their distresses on themselves, by their vacillation and their servile anxiety to stand well with the court. They had ever taken the political side in all disputes; and every archbishop that had

attempted anything for the reform of the Church, had found his own chapter one of the most obstinate of the component parts of the opposition. John of Salisbury<sup>1</sup> writes of them, "The Canterbury monks seem to hold hatred to their archbishops as part of their inheritance. When Anselm was in exile in a righteous cause, they never offered him aught for his consolation; Ralph they contemned, William they hated, for Theobald they laid snares, and lo! now Thomas, without cause, they cease not to persecute."

Their exile and persecution for Langton, though it was not voluntary on their parts, had probably done them good. And they had been favoured in their two last prelates. Richard was of becoming life, and learning sufficient; and he had journeyed to Rome to lay before the Holy See certain disorders in the administration of the realm. He had procured authority to redress them, but died on his return, and all his labour was lost, and the monks had again to go through the storms and troubles of an election.

On this occasion, the recollection of what they had suffered for Langton threw a weight into the scale of the king's party, and it was resolved to elect a person who should be quite acceptable at court. They pitched on Ralph de Neville, Bishop of Chichester. He was at this time Chancellor; and, by way of turning a compliment, the monks said in their petition to the king, that they hoped this choice might prove as auspicious as that of the last Chancellor who had been raised to the Archiepiscopal dignity; alluding to S. Thomas. The allusion might appear injudicious when we remember in what cause Becket had suffered, and that it was Henry's

<sup>1</sup> Ep. ii. 36.

grandfather who had murdered him. But it was not so ; he was now a Saint, the glory of England, the pride of Canterbury, and all parties, the court which had put him to death, the monks who had forsaken him, now claimed him as their own. Their fathers had stoned the prophets, and they built their sepulchres.

Their petition was graciously allowed by the king, and he invested Neville with the temporalities. The monks had only to send to Rome for confirmation. Before they set off, their deputies visited the prelate elect, and begged him to contribute to the expenses of their journey, and the necessary fees of the Roman court. This de Neville flatly refused, as savouring of simony. The monks professed not to be displeased by this specimen of his integrity, and hastened to Rome. The Pope appointed Simon Langton, as an English Cardinal, to make the usual inquiry into the character of the archbishop elect. The report was not very favourable ; but the chief objections were his having lived so long in the court, and his implication in all the secular business of the realm. Gregory thought a fitter person might be found to entrust the see of Canterbury to. The monks were sent back to make a better election.

It was now the turn of the other party in the convent, the party that leaned to the stricter side. Ralph de Neville had been set aside for his worldly temper and occupations. They thought, therefore, they could not do better than take their own Prior John, a monk, grown old within his convent walls, and acquainted with nothing beyond them. He went himself to Rome ; and, as nothing was known of him, the commission of cardinals were directed to examine him in theology. What such an examination was we learn

in the case of another monk of Christchurch, who had been elected to succeed Langton. He was asked, whether our Lord had come down on earth in the flesh ; as to the mode of production of Christ's body on the altar ; what was meant by Rachel weeping for her children ; what was the effect of a sentence given against the right, and what was the canon law on the subject of mixed marriages.<sup>2</sup> The present candidate, however, was more successful than this brother William seven years before. After a three days' examination in nineteen articles, the examiners reported him sufficiently competent in theology. His age, however, and his simplicity seemed to the pope to disqualify him for a post so arduous. The prior, therefore, at once humbly withdrew his claim, and sought licence to return.

The next choice of the chapter was Richard<sup>3</sup> Blundy, Chancellor of York. But when he came to Rome, it was found that he held two benefices to which were attached care of souls, which had been expressly forbidden by the Lateran Council ; and it was besides discovered that Peter de Roches had lent him 2,000 marks, which it was suspected that he had employed in bribing the monks, and had endeavoured to get the Emperor to make interest for him at Rome. And it was known that his principles agreed with his practice ; he had maintained the cause of John, and the doctrine of the royal supremacy.<sup>4</sup> This was manifestly a bad case, and there was no difficulty in annulling this election.

Three times the chapter had thus exercised their pri-

<sup>2</sup> Graystones, Hist. Dunelm. p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> 'Joannes,' Wend.

<sup>4</sup> A. Wood, Hist. & Antiq. i. 83, but he gives no authority.

vilege in complete independence, unfettered by any recommendation open or secret, at court, and had failed to find a man properly qualified. Their ill-success when they had so fair a trial may reconcile us to see their freedom of election so often controlled. The see had now lain vacant nearly three years. Gregory resolved, therefore, to assist their judgment, as Innocent had done in recommending Langton, and accordingly proposed to them the treasurer of Salisbury. There are some persons whose fitness for a particular office is such, that every one at once recognizes it, and they occupy it when it falls to them as naturally as the heir succeeds to his father's throne. This was the case with S. Edmund. As soon as his name was mentioned, the choice approved itself to all, both at Rome and in England. The deputation of monks who had received the recommendation at Rome, had no powers from their convent to elect, and were obliged to return to Canterbury. There was some opposition within the convent from the party who feared the severity of the ascetic Edmund, but it was overruled and the election was made.

Throughout the realm there was but one dissentient voice—and that was his own. When the messengers who had been despatched to announce to him his election arrived at Salisbury, he was absent. The dean, hearing their business, said, “Your coming is both welcome and unwelcome; welcome for the honour done our church in taking your primate from among us; unwelcome for the loss we shall sustain.” The messengers found him at Calne, not far from his favourite retirement, Stanley Abbey. His household gave vent to their joy at the news by clapping their hands.<sup>5</sup> And

<sup>5</sup> Familia . . . . plaudit manibus. B.

one of them entered the chamber in which Edmund was intently wrapt in study to announce it to him. He was surprised to be met only by a rebuke for his unseasonable intrusion, and was bid to be silent. He withdrew in confusion, and none dared after this to make the attempt again. Not the least surprised were the messengers themselves that he did not rush out to welcome them.<sup>6</sup> They had had lately to announce more than one election, and had probably never yet met such a reception. At his accustomed hour, neither sooner nor later,<sup>7</sup> he came out of his chamber and saluted the strangers. When they had declared to him the object of their mission, he began to weep, saying, "I am a worm and no man; I have neither the virtue nor the literature that you suppose in me. Men are much deceived in their opinion of me." And he besought them earnestly to transfer their choice to some one more worthy. The next day, they prevailed on him to accompany them to Salisbury; and here the bishop, and his brother canons, joined in urging him to consent. But he remained immovable in his refusal, and returned again to Calne. The deputation from Canterbury followed him here, and represented to him that by his obstinacy he might be the cause of great mischief; for if he did not accept the see, some one might be put in from whom the church might receive much damage. Overcome at last by their earnest entreaties he yielded, or seemed to yield, for he would not give any express consent, but only said, "He who knoweth all things, knoweth that I would never consent to this election,

<sup>6</sup> Admirabantur non modicum, quod illorum non prosiliret ocus in occursum. Id.

<sup>7</sup> Non tardius solito nec celerius. Id.

did I not fear I might otherwise be committing a mortal sin." Content with this, as it was all they could get, they force him into the church, and prostrate on the ground before the holy altar, chant alternately the *Te Deum*, sounds of weeping and sorrow mingling with notes of joy. He was elected on the vigil of S. Matthew, 1233, confirmed at Rome on the vigil of S. Thomas, and consecrated at Canterbury on the 2nd of April, 1234.

His exaltation changed in no respect the austerity of his life or the temper of his mind. He was only the more careful to watch against any elation of heart on this account, and his humility was more conspicuous than before. He assumed neither purple nor fine linen, but wore his old vest of white, or grey wool, though, that he might not offend others, he put over it a robe suited to his condition. He would often draw off his shoes with his own hand, which, in the Primate of all England, was a notable sign of lowliness of spirit.<sup>6</sup> On leaving the chapel, he would sometimes carry his cross himself to his chamber. If any of the clerks who attended him had been prevented from hearing mass at the ordinary time, he would himself say one for their use. When travelling, if any one, no matter how humble, requested him to confess him, he would dismount at once, and hear his confession on the spot with the utmost kindness and devotion, and never refused, either on account of the unseasonableness of the hour, or because the place at which he was to rest was not far.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> In primate totius Angliæ humilitatis indicium singulare. Id.

<sup>9</sup> In curious contrast with this is what is related of an Elector-Bishop of Mayence in the last century ; that passing in his carriage



To himself only was he severe ; merciful and compassionate to all others. He was like "the olive-tree in the house of the Lord," which, to use his own comment, retains to itself the bitterness of its stock, giving forth good gifts to others ; to the hungry food, to those in darkness light, and oil to the faint. But the poor and afflicted were, above all, the objects of his fatherly care. He had ever borne towards them the bowels of love and pity, but now he seemed to give himself up to their service. No beggar ever went unrelieved from his threshold. No traveller of honest condition was ever refused entertainment. He caused his attendants to visit the houses of the sick and infirm, many of whom he maintained as daily pensioners upon him. The daughters of poor men he would provide with a competent portion when they grew up, that they might marry, and bear children in honest wedlock. To this special object he set apart the amerciaments and fines which were paid in his courts for certain offences.

A certain knight had to pay eighty pounds, for a fine, or relief, of a manor which he held of the see of Canterbury. It was a great exertion for him to raise such a sum. The archbishop received it, but immediately returned it, as a dower to portion out his four daughters, whose marriage must have been otherwise postponed.

The custom of heriots was introduced by the Danes, and prevailed still in some manors. It was, that, on

one day through the streets of his capital, he saw a man taken suddenly ill. He stopped his carriage, and bade his footman fetch a clergyman from a neighbouring church. He had completely forgotten his own possession of the spiritual powers necessary. Robertson, Pref. to Mühler Symb.

the death of the tenant, the lord claimed the best goods, piece of plate, &c., or, more commonly, the best beast of which the tenant died possessed.<sup>1</sup> When this happened, the widows of the defunct, knowing his compassionate heart, would come before him and plead their poverty and distress. He would answer, in English, "Good woman, such is law and the custom of the soil here." And, turning to those who stood by, he would add, in Latin or French, "Yea, and an evil law, and a custom, verily, of diabolical, and not of divine origin, that a poor widow should lose, together with her husband, whatever of most worth her husband hath left her." Then, turning again to the suitor, "If I lend to you the use of this beast, will you keep it for me well?" at the same time ordering his bailiff to restore it.

He steadily refused all presents of whatever sorts. Such gifts were commonly offered to men in power by inferiors; they were not bribes, but were considered legitimate means of propitiating their favour and securing their good offices. But to Edmund they seemed so many snares, tempting him to follow some other direction than the strict rule of justice. "Shall the devil," he would say, "who never could deceive me in this way when I was poor, prevail now that I am rich and want nothing? It is by gifts which are neither given nor accepted as done before God, that Christianity is corrupted in these days; and they will destroy it insensibly, unless God give us his grace to clear ourselves from this plague."<sup>2</sup> A bishop once sent

<sup>1</sup> Heriot=*here-geld*, the lord's money. Or, *here-gat*, the lord's beast.

<sup>2</sup> Per dona quæ nec data sunt nec accepta secundum Deum, cor-

him a rich present of plate and jewels. But, knowing something of the archbishop's mind, he gave the commission to one of his clerks who was well known to Edmund, and who would therefore, he thought, be able to prevail with him to accept them. When Edmund resisted all his entreaties, the messenger begged him only to accept a single ring, containing a stone of great value, and this he urged, not for the gift's sake, but for that of the bearer, that he might not have to go away dishonoured. "I have one ring," was all the answer; "what should I do with another?" The bishop thought he might yet prevail, if he offered him somewhat of a less costly kind, and withal of some use. He therefore procured two bed coverlets, the most elegant, however, that were to be had. One of these he gave to Edmund's brother, and prayed that he would only prevail with the archbishop to accept the other. Edmund not only refused, but rebuked his brother severely for his complaisance. "He has, then, gained you, but he shall not gain me; I trust my book," pointing to the Scripture, "rather than your words." As a last attempt, they offered him a silver pix, as though not for himself, but for his chapel. But "in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." "*Prendre* and *pendre*," he would say, "differ but in one letter."

He was particularly jealous in requiring purity of all who were about him. In hiring a servant he would stipulate, that, should it happen that they suffered themselves to fall in this respect, they should receive what was due to them, and immediately quit his household.

rupta est Christianitas, et deficiet priusquam hoc advertant Christiani. B.

The female sex he ever highly honoured and esteemed, both on account of their devotion, and out of reverence to the Blessed Virgin. Many besides the Countess Ella found in him an adviser and friend. A certain baron's only daughter, in Northamptonshire, left an heiress by her father's death, desired to devote herself to religion. By advice of the man of God, she had entered the nunnery of Catesby, of which his sister was the prioress. With this nun he kept up a continual intercourse by messengers, sending her words of support and consolation.<sup>3</sup> Being one Easter in the neighbourhood of Catesby, he sent to his sister to desire her to hasten to his court at that festival for their mutual consolation,<sup>4</sup> and to bring this nun with her. When they arrived on Easter eve, embracing the latter in the presence of all, he said :—"If the world were not more evil in its judgments than we in our thoughts, we would never separate!" At another time when one of his friends was venturing to find fault with him for allowing this intimate friendship to subsist, he meekly made answer :—"If all the actions of my life were to be written on my forehead, I should have nothing to blush for in respect of this description of sins."

His habits of study and devotion he continued, as far as he could, such as they had been at Salisbury. But they were more broken in upon by duty and business than before. The time spent in travelling from place to place he grudged as so much lost. He would spend almost the whole night in prayer, beating his breast,

<sup>3</sup> *Venientibus et redeuntibus nunciis hanc ut unicam charissimam salutare solebat, et congruis subsidiis relevare.* CHRON. LANERCOST, in which 'Northfolckie' is perhaps a mistake for 'Northantunæ.'

<sup>4</sup> *Causa consolationis venire non desistat.* Id.

and falling with his bare knees on the floor, in such a way as to disturb the sleep of his clerks who were lodged in the rooms beneath. Some of them were so weary of these and his other austerities, that they quitted his service on various pretexts. Thus the savour of life was to them a savour of death. In the performance of the mass he handled all the vessels with such a reverence, that the mere sight of it provoked the beholders to devotion. All through the office he was in tears, as though he were beholding with the bodily eye the Lord's Passion being enacted.

Such was his manner of life throughout. Thus he had lived while lecturing at Paris, thus he continued to live after he had laid upon him the care of the whole English Church. Nay, he rather added to, than diminished, the severity of his habits as he grew older. Let us observe the large proportion of his day which was devoted to praise and prayer. Meditation and devotion were his business, his serious occupation, and his temporal engagements a mere break or blank in his existence. This is, in short, the secret of his asceticism. Such extreme mortification of the body, even could life be supported under it, would be torture were the mind unoccupied, or occupied only with temporal things. Love venting itself in praise and assiduous meditation, is the support absolutely necessary to such a life. Hence some who have attempted lower degrees of severity have sometimes failed through want of this mental aliment. "His fall into heresy," Mr. Roper would often say of himself, "did first grow of a scruple of his own conscience, for lack of grace, and better understanding. For he daily did use immoderate fasting and many prayers ; which if discretion and counsel had prescribed, it had been well ; but using them of his

own head, without order and consideration, thinking God never to be pleased therewith, he did weary himself *usque ad tedium*, even unto loathsomeness thereof.”<sup>5</sup> It is beginning at the wrong end to attempt great austerities (such as are done as penance for sin being excepted) where faith and love are weak. “The extraordinary austerities of certain eminent servants of God are not undertaken by them without a particular call, examined with maturity and prudence, and without a fervour equal to such a state.”<sup>6</sup>

But it would seem that he that is to be brought to perfection, must not only be fortified by an austere self-discipline, but must needs pass through the furnace of outward trial. The trials of active life are generally more formidable and searching to the character, than those to which we are exposed in a life of quiet and seclusion; and so in an ascending scale the wider the sphere, the more momentous the interests, and more important the questions involved: in that degree is the test to which the man is put more active, and the quality of the virtues called into play more refined. Thus it has been said, that an age which produces great men is one which has produced great evils. It is through resistance to a force of more than ordinary magnitude that men are made heroes. High qualities are called out by the vigour of the evil they have to contend with. But the apparent magnitude of an evil is no true gauge and measure of its real iniquity. Those which are popularly thought most of, which excite most clamour under the name of abuses, are generally of the least mischievous class; material evil in some shape or

<sup>5</sup> Ap. Wordsworth's Eccles. Biogr. ii. 118.

<sup>6</sup> A. Butler, i. 536.

other, such as economical mismanagement, injustice, partiality in the distribution of the goods of this life. But the subtler forms of evil, unseen by the grosser eyes of the generality, are those which are likely to press most heavily on the spirit of the perfect. And we may well conceive that the mind of the Saints, which is "the same mind that was in Christ Jesus," as it assigns their just place and proportion to the divers degrees of good, altering in this the common judgment of men, so it weighs and judges of evil by a very different standard from that prevalent in the world. It cannot but be, that, as the soul advances in love of the good, its sense of evil should become more exquisite. We cannot tell the source or nature of that sorrow which wrought the agony of Gethsemane. No more are we adequate judges what keen pangs a saintly spirit may not feel at the sight or contact of sins that we may overlook.

We have seen what Edmund's private life was ; such as of itself must have produced a saintly character. But it was the trials of his public life which perfected him, which entitled him to the rank which he holds as confessor in the church. For these he was gradually prepared and trained by the private discipline of the church and the cloister. He had gained the victory over the great foe—himself, before a new world was opened out to him to conquer. So untrue is the notion entertained by some, that monastic virtue is hollow and unpractical, affording no security against the temptations of active life ; when, on the contrary, it is the only perfect means of bracing and arming the character.

To sum up shortly, what seems to have been his peculiar trial,—it was, the secular spirit which had invaded the church. To find the world worldly causes no surprise ; that is Satan's kingdom, and in it and

with it he wars as on his own ground, and without disguise, against the children of light. But to come from a life and retirement such as Edmund had hitherto led, from the abstract contemplation of the high calling of the Christian, of the glorious privileges of the children of light, and then to find, in fact, that the very persons who enjoy this calling, and claim to be heirs of these privileges, are themselves most ready to barter them away, are anxious to do away the barrier between themselves and the world, and to amalgamate with what they are professing to renounce, this is to find treachery within the camp of Israel, to look round for friends, and to find them the first to betray the common cause. That the king, the barons, the lay people, some or all of them, should be in opposition to him, might neither surprise nor grieve him. But the bishops were unfriendly ; his own chapter disliked his asceticism ; the legate went against him in everything ; and, worst desolation of all, the very occupant of the Holy See seemed little inclined to support him, if the king or the crown party were to be in anything offended or resisted.

At first the archbishop seemed to make great progress in arranging matters which had been long subjects of contention. For example, the long-standing disputes with the Convent of S. Augustine were set at rest by a composition, both parties abating something from their claims for the love of peace.<sup>7</sup> These were minor matters, and related to claims of jurisdiction, tithes, and appropriations. For example, the abbots insisted upon having the church bells rung when they entered any parish which belonged to them. This had always been

<sup>7</sup> Pro bono pacis concedunt. Thorn. ap. X. Script.



resisted by the archbishops, but was now conceded by Edmund. These seem trifles, but they were not, for under them lay hid the really important subject of dispute. The formal cause of all the jealousy which broke out in these details was the exemption which the convent of S. Augustine had procured for themselves from the jurisdiction of the see of Canterbury; which exemption they had gradually extended to several of the churches which belonged to them, and which they were continually aiming to extend to all of them.

The archbishop's difficulties with his own convent were of a graver nature. We have seen how the prevailing party in the chapter had sought to have a man out of the king's court for their bishop, and when Edmund was recommended to them by the pope, they had demurred through fear of his character for asceticism. The account given by Giraldus of his entertainment there helps us to a knowledge of these monks. Passing through Canterbury, and being lodged at the convent, he was invited by the prior to dine with the monks in the refectory. Instead of the three dishes of very meagre quality which the rule of S. Benedict allows, he was astonished by seeing sixteen of a most sumptuous description brought in one after another. The fish and eggs were dressed in every variety of method which the skill of the cook could invent, and accompanied with rich sauces and spices to provoke appetite. After all this a dish of potherbs was brought up, round all the tables, of which they just tasted, to keep up the semblance of Benedictine diet. Tent, claret, and every variety of rich wine abounded, so that beer, for which Kent was especially famous, found no favour. They professed to observe silence during the meal. But what with signs, and signals made by hand, arms, and head,

passing between the prior and the monks who served, messes being sent from the higher to the lower tables, and those who received them returning thanks by gestures, and the hissing sounds they substituted for a call,—"with all this one might have thought himself," says Giraldus, "among so many actors or jongleurs."<sup>8</sup> In this state of things they would hardly be likely to wish for the company of S. Edmund. And we can very easily understand how disagreements should arise between them, though we know nothing of their details, and, according to the testimony of a contemporary,<sup>9</sup> it would not be to the credit of the chapter that we should. "This year (1188) a dispute arose between the archbishop and the monks of Canterbury, about which the said archbishop journeyed to Rome. And then both parties having laid their case before the pope, it was found and proved that the monks were guilty in certain articles, which, out of respect to that Church, it is better to hide than to speak of. Notwithstanding of the truth of these allegations are many well certified. After the discovery, however, John, the prior of Canterbury, fearing for himself, and out of dread of the severity of the canonical inquiry, resigned his office and passed into a house of the Carthusian order." The convent, thus destitute of a prior, called on the archbishop to appoint one. This he delayed to do for some reason or other, whereupon the monks appointed one themselves. This infraction of privilege was met by the archbishop by an excommunication of the prior so elected, and of all those who had had any share in his election, and by laying an interdict on their church. The monks interposed an appeal to the pope, and in

<sup>8</sup> De Rebus a se gestis, ii. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Annal. Waverl.

disregard of the interdict continued to celebrate and ring their bells at the usual hours.<sup>1</sup>

There might seem, at first, little reason to fear that any difficulty could arise to the archbishop on the part of the king—a king such as Henry the Third, of whom even his enemies allowed, that, though “little wise in matters of the world, the more did he abound in devotion towards God.”<sup>2</sup> It is almost incredible, that not content with hearing three high masses every day, he was assiduous in frequenting other private celebrations.<sup>3</sup> But devotion alone, where the other gifts of the Holy Ghost, which make the perfect man, are deficient, will not ensure right action. Good intentions and a pious disposition are only one ingredient in a good will. Henry the Third is a remarkable instance of the harm that may be done by the weakness of an otherwise good character.

Non per far, ma per non fare.

Vedete il Re della semplice vita

Seder la solo, Arrigo d’Inghilterra.<sup>4</sup>

For this he is placed by the poet among children, and others who have lived useless lives, and are punished chiefly by darkness and solitude.

At first, indeed, the archbishop seemed to succeed in his efforts, and to make more progress towards obtaining the settlement of a good government by his representations than all the armed resistance of the earl marshal had been able to effect. Very shortly after his election, and before he was consecrated, the archbishop, attended

<sup>1</sup> The words of the Annals “usque hodie,” in this place, shew that this entry was made at no great distance of time after the occurrence.

<sup>2</sup> Rishanger.

<sup>3</sup> Id.

<sup>4</sup> Dante, Purgatorio.

a Parliament held at Westminster (Feb. 1234). Here he joined or headed the other bishops in a remonstrance with the king on the lamentable state of the kingdom. The evil complained of was shortly this. Henry did not, like his predecessors, govern himself. He left that for the most part to the great officers of the Crown, who thus became ministers. The party at present about him were Peter de Roches, and the Poitevin, who had made their fortunes under John. They were a small party, hated by the native nobility, and only powerful by their money and their mercenary soldiers. Under the king's name, these foreigners worked their own will and pleasure in the realm. But not without meeting a strong opposition from the native party, far the most numerous, which shewed itself in raids and plundering expeditions against the castles and lands of their opponents. To these they very scrupulously confined themselves, abstaining from the indiscriminate devastations which had been practised by both parties under John twenty years before. Still it was a very serious evil; the poor people suffered much. The obvious remedy was to get rid of Peter de Roches and his party, and to entrust the government to the chiefs of the native party. This was the object of the advice and remonstrance offered to the king on this occasion by the archbishop. We may wonder that Edmund issuing from such an abstract and contemplative life should have understood enough of the situation of affairs to have been able to judge what was best to be done to cure the existing evils. But politics are very simple to one whose eye is single, and whose aim is only to do good. In every practical question, there is but a right and a wrong; and it is rare that there can be any doubt on which side the right is to be found.

The king, who was truly desirous of peace,<sup>5</sup> promised to attend to their petition, but required time to exact the accounts from the present treasurer. On the 2nd of April the archbishop was consecrated ; and, in a Parliament held shortly after, the king dismissed Peter de Roches, sending him back to his bishoprick, and desiring him henceforward to occupy himself wholly with its affairs. Such was the royal authority, that the mere word of a weak and helpless prince like Henry was enough to overthrow this formidable prelate and his whole party.

The king then proceeded to despatch the archbishop into Wales to bring Llewellyn to terms. He was successful in this, and met the king at Gloucester, with an account of his success. It had seemed likely that the disgraced ministers would escape without further notice of their misdeeds, when a new crime of theirs, the issue of which had just come to light, provoked the king to greater rigour against them. This was the death of the marshal, Richard, earl of Pembroke, who had fallen by treachery in Ireland. This had been contrived by letters sent in the king's name to the Irish Lords. A copy of these had fallen into the archbishop's hands, and he now read them before the king and the bishops and lords who were present. At this discovery of the plot that had been laid for his life, all who were present were affected to tears ; and the king among the rest. And the archbishop said, "the real authors of this letter and contrivers of this treachery, whosoever they are, are as much guilty of the death of the earl, as if they had slain him with their own hands." The king declared, that while in the hands of the bishop of Win-

<sup>5</sup> Qui modis omnibus pacem sitiebat. Wendover.

chester and Peter de Rivaulx, he had ordered his seal to be put to many documents presented to him, without knowing their contents, and that this letter must have been among them. On this, writs were issued to summon the four ministers, viz. the bishop of Winchester, Peter de Rivaulx, Stephen de Segrave, and Robert Passelewe, to render an account of their administration of the treasury, and especially of their abuse of the king's seal. They either refused to quit the sanctuaries to which they fled, or compounded by fines ; and so, for the present, peace and order were restored to the kingdom.

And so, for some short time, they remained. Not but that many things were done, many practices continued, which were very grievous in the archbishop's eyes ; yet still in many the king listened to his counsel. And it is no little praise of any court that one so entirely alien from the easy and accommodating principles of this world as S. Edmund, should have had any weight in it. Henry's court was not, indeed, like that of his saintly contemporary, where a Dominican friar was in more honour than earl or knight, but yet it seemed purity compared with those of the preceding sovereigns. But there are other things equally forbidden by the Law of God, besides coarse licentiousness, and which a minister of God may not pass over unheeded, and in which obedience is perhaps more difficult for one in power, inasmuch as the right and wrong, though plain, are not always so obvious.

William, earl of Pembroke, (elder brother of Richard, who was killed in Ireland,) had died in 1231. His widow, Eleanor, King Henry's own sister, had, in the first excess of her grief, resolved on entering a convent. She had not taken the habit and veil, *i. e.*

made her final profession, but had taken the vow of continence, when Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, who, according to the chronicle, was as tall and goodly a person to behold as he was a brave knight,<sup>6</sup> succeeded in engaging her affections, and they were married by the king's consent, and in his own chapel at Westminster, by his own chaplain. The archbishop, in whose hands the countess had made her vow, had in vain endeavoured to prevent this breach of it. In order to get rid of his opposition, and to secure himself for the future, Simon de Montfort had recourse to Rome, and procured thence a dispensation. It may be wondered why the archbishop had contented himself with remonstrance on the occasion, and had not at once excommunicated the offending parties. But his jurisdiction was not, at this moment, supreme in England. The courtiers had very early begun to fear that the new archbishop was likely to prove an inconvenient obstacle in their way, and had considered how they might rid themselves of him. At some times, and in some reigns, this could have been done by the short and familiar method of violence, banishment from the court, or the kingdom, if necessary, of the prelate who stood in the way. But Henry would not hear of such a mode of dealing with any bishop, much less such a holy man as S. Edmund. It would answer all the purpose to obtain from the pope a legate, who, acquainted with affairs, would be found more flexible and accommodating. Or, even in case he should not be quite as subservient as were to be wished, he and the archbishop would still be a mutual check upon one another. The legate sent

<sup>6</sup> Chron. Lanercost.

was Otho, cardinal deacon of S. Nicolas, in Carcere Tulliano, who had been in England before, in Stephen Langton's time. He was received with every mark of honour and respect. The king met him at the water-side, attended by bishops and clergy ; and it was particularly noted by such as were great in interpreting little things, that, in saluting him, he bent his head as low as the legate's knees. Some of the bishops who were most eager to secure his goodwill, or had most cause to fear his severity, had sent forward presents to him while he was yet at Paris, selecting, as the most acceptable offering to a cardinal, scarlet cloth. And as soon as he reached England, bishops, abbots, and chapters vied with one another in making him rich offerings, according to their means. Among others, the bishop of Winchester, learning that he was to spend the winter in London, sent him fifty oxen, one hundred measures of wheat, and eight hogsheads of wine, for his provision. But Otho, who knew the *jéalous* opinion that prevailed in England of the rapacity of Roman ecclesiastics, assumed great moderation, accepted some of the presents, as it were out of courtesy, and refused the rest, and altogether, by his discreet and temperate behaviour, obviated some of the discontent which his mission had occasioned. Those who had not been parties to the invitation sent to Rome could see no occasion for it ; there was no public quarrel, no flagrant disorder, nothing that called for the mission of a legate.<sup>7</sup>

Edmund, however, understood for what purpose he had been sent for, and complained to the king of his having taken this step without consulting, or so

<sup>7</sup> *Nesciebatur ad quid veniebat.* Matt. Par.



much as informing, either himself or his parliament. The sort of retort to which he thus exposed himself was obvious ; that he did not wish to have his jurisdiction infringed and invaded by the presence of a legate. For a legate's power was boundless ; he represented the pope in the province to which he was deputed, and, on all public occasions, he occupied the place which the archbishop of Canterbury would otherwise have filled. When the prince of Wales (Edward the First) was born, the legate, though not a priest, baptized him, the archbishop taking the inferior place of confirming him. And when a council was held in S. Paul's, the legate's seat was, by his own direction, raised above that of all the other prelates present, the two archbishops sitting lower, Canterbury on his right and York on his left.

Nor was the real purpose of Otho's unexpected appearance in England long a secret from any one. He began to exercise his privilege of filling up at his discretion the vacant preferments. He insensibly relaxed his first apparent self-denial, and gradually acquired a goodly array of servants, horses, plate, and furniture. At the same time, at a council that he convoked, he passed many good and salutary canons, or constitutions, for the enforcement of the much needed discipline in the English Church. Thus he offended that large class of the clergy who considered license as their birthright, and claimed a sort of national privilege of exemption from the law of the Church universal, in a double manner, by his canonical rigour, and by his assumption of pomp and state. The spirit in which this class, and they represented the prevailing sentiment, met his reforms was displayed in a speech of the bishop of Worcester. He was Walter de Cantelupe, the son of one of

John's satellites. When the reader came to the statute forbidding pluralities,<sup>8</sup> he rose, and laying aside his mitre, addressed the legate in behalf of sinecures and pluralities. He represented them as injured men whose property was being attacked, and vested rights invaded. "Many of them," he said, "are men of high birth, and noble English blood, who have lived their whole lives in honour and no mean state, their doors ever open, both for hospitality and for alms. Would you by one stroke deprive these of the means of this magnificence, and condemn them in their old age to an ignominious poverty? Others again are young, fiery spirits, vigorous hands, and be assured they will never submit tamely to be stripped of their benefices. I judge of them by what I feel within myself. Before I was advanced to the episcopal dignity I resolved within myself that sooner than surrender peaceably, on the pretext of any such canon as the present, one of the benefices I now hold, I would run the risk of losing all. There are numbers of us in a like disposition. We beseech you, therefore, as you regard your own welfare<sup>9</sup> and ours, to refer this constitution to our lord the pope before you resolve on enforcing it." The legate was not a Pandulph, nor had he an Innocent the Third to support him. This insulting defiance was so evidently well received by the

<sup>8</sup> These provincial councils were not held for the making new canons. Such could only be made in a General Council presided over by the pope. But a selection was made previously by the legate, with the advice of a select number of the prelates, of such canons (of the ivth Lateran council chiefly) as were considered most needed or most seasonable for the particular kingdom or province. These were then read in the Synod and accepted by them, after which they became the canon law of the Province.

<sup>9</sup> Salutem.

assembly that he was obliged to temporize, and to promise to take these arguments into consideration. After such a moral demonstration, however, it is manifest, that, whatever statutes might be passed at this synod, they would remain a dead letter.

The legate met with another repulse about the same time, in an attempt he made to extend his authority into Scotland. "The Church of Scotland," said pope Gregory, in the brief which he forwarded to him for this purpose, "depends immediately on the apostolic see, which is its only mother and metropolis. It would therefore be little fitting that this, our own special child, should lack our special love and consolation, or be deprived of that benefit of our legate's visitation which we are indulging to the neighbouring kingdom."<sup>1</sup> But discipline in this Church was still more decayed than in the English; national customs had superseded the canons to a greater extent, and the mass of the clergy were as little disposed as prepared to submit their state to the judicial eyes of a legate. They fell back for protection upon the laity, whose interest was equally concerned in the maintenance of things as they were. They professed that the national honour was touched by this unwarrantable intrusion of the legate. The king himself (Alexander the Third) advanced to meet Otho at York. A legate's visitation, he assured him, was quite unnecessary; there was nothing amiss in the Church of his realm. Both himself and the barons were very well satisfied; Christianity flourished; the Church was prosperous.<sup>2</sup> Such assurances, and coming from such a quarter, only produced the contrary effect

<sup>1</sup> Epist. Greg. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Christianitas floruit, ecclesia prospere se habebat. Matt. Par.

to what was desired, and the legate was more than ever convinced of the necessity of his presence. Then the king declared that if he came he could not answer for the consequences, such was the unpopularity of himself and his office. However, the legate persevered. The claim of the pope to visit the Church of Scotland was so indubitable, that it could not be resisted, however unpalatable it might be ; and accordingly, two years after we find the legate at Edinburgh holding a synod, and attempting to revive something of the lost spirit of the Church among the degenerate clergy of that kingdom.

We have dwelt on this spirit of opposition to the legatine visitation, as it opens to us the tone and temper of the English Church in the time of S. Edmund. And unhappily not in S. Edmund's time only, but throughout its whole history, from the later Saxon times to Henry the Eighth, we can trace the working of the same corrupt leaven. Our island has justly to boast of her great Saints, of the abundant zeal and high munificence of her nobles, and the earnest devotion of her people. But when from those illustrious examples we turn to look at the condition of the mass of the clergy, when we close the lives of the Saints, and open the page of general history, we find a prevalent temper of covetousness, ambition, and sensuality almost the characteristic of the clergy, secular and religious, alike. And from such habits of life spring, as the natural growth, the peculiar political doctrines, the national bias of our clergy, their leaning to the crown rather than the pope, to the visible rather than the invisible kingdom, their jealousy of foreign interference, their preference of laws made by a parliament composed of men of the world, to canons enacted in the spirit of the Church. In the eyes of the contemporary monk of St. Alban's,

who chronicled his proceedings, the legate Otho was a poor Italian, who was sent to England to make his own fortune and that of as many of his friends as possible, to extort money under diverse pretexts his sole occupation ; and we have some difficulty in recognizing the same Otho who accompanied Louis the Ninth to the Holy Land, and whom we find in company with that Saint, burying with his own hands the corrupting corpses of the Christians before Sidon.

We may suppose how Edmund felt this evil ; indeed it came home to him in every direction, on every occasion on which he had to act. Yet the clearness with which he saw, and the keenness with which he felt the evil, did not lead him to a violent and uncompromising warfare against it. Loud denunciations and declamation against abuses are not arms that can be used on behalf of the Church. Such evils are to be fought against by the silent prayers and unseen mortifications of holy men. Some even thought the archbishop too remiss and lenient.<sup>3</sup> One of the bad practices of the time was that of the clergy, and even those of the regular orders, exercising the offices of the king's justices itinerant, and sitting in other of the king's courts. The bishop of Lincoln, the celebrated Robert Grosteste, was very urgent with the archbishop to check this disorder, which was encouraged by the king, though it had been prohibited again and again by councils.<sup>4</sup> One of those who lived with him, presuming on this familiarity, ventured to remonstrate with him, saying it would be better to lose his archbishoprick than see his Church so oppressed. He answered, that if the

<sup>3</sup> A multis reputabatur minus justo rigidus. B.

<sup>4</sup> Epist. Rob. Gr. ap. Raynaldi, an. 1237.

possession of the archbishoprick was of more value to him than the clay under his feet, he would at once resign it.

Not, however, that he was inactive. Such was the opposition he experienced from his own monks, that it could not be settled without an appeal to Rome. He undertook the journey himself, and a deputation of the monks followed. He wished for an amicable adjustment of the dispute. This was apparently effected; when the monks, without any previous notice, presented a list of charges against the primate himself. What they were we do not know, but we can easily imagine them. However, the state of the case was quite understood at Rome, and the monks' petition was dismissed with ignominy.<sup>5</sup> It happened during his stay at Rome, that on the feast of S. Gregory, the pope (Gregory the Ninth) invited the cardinals and all the prelates who were at Rome at the time to a banquet.<sup>6</sup> The archbishop of Canterbury, though urged to go by his friends, stayed away, and was the only one absent. On this very occasion the nephew of the cardinal of Præneste was assassinated in the pope's presence. It was thought by all that Edmund had been providentially kept at a distance that he might not be obliged to look on this deed of blood.<sup>7</sup> Such was, even then, the opinion entertained of him.

He returned to his see, but not to peace. The king had never forgotten his opposition to his sister's marriage with Simon de Montfort. This had first alienated

<sup>5</sup> Turpiter rejectis, et penitus reprobatis, cum extrema recesserunt confusione. MS. Fell.

<sup>6</sup> Ad caritatis poculum. B.

<sup>7</sup> Ne Sancti ejus violaretur obtutus, Dei providentia id fiebat. Id.

him from the archbishop, into whose arms he had at first thrown himself, and to whose counsels he had listened exclusively. But the king's marriage had further weaned him from Edmund's influence. It had brought a new set of courtiers about him ; Provencals, relations of the young queen, Eleanor, daughter of Raymond, Count of Provence. Her uncles soon got the management of the king into their hands, and aimed only at turning it to their own profit. Under these circumstances, it became very difficult to obtain grants of money from the parliament. Their reluctance increased every year ; indeed Henry had almost to purchase the aids he required by some fresh concession, some further abridgment of the prerogative of the crown. The sources of revenue that were independent of the great council of the barons, became thus of more importance than before. Among these, a very fertile one was the produce of the vacant sees and abbeys. This was now regarded as a settled regular portion of the royal income. It was no longer looked upon as an invasion of the rights of the Church, but as a matter of course, that they should be kept vacant several years for the benefit of the treasury. We hardly ever find a see filled up under two years. And, the richer it was, the less chance it had of being speedily provided for. And the mode of prolonging the vacancy was no longer by threats or actual violence, as Rufus had done, but by the vexatious delays of law and form. The monks or canons of the vacant see had first to find the king ; then, after following his motions from place to place, license to elect was issued, when it could be no longer withheld. Then they returned to their chapter to elect ; then again to the king to announce the election. Then the king considered of the election ; at last objected to

it;<sup>8</sup> and the monks returned to make a fresh choice. If this was refused, perhaps the electors appealed to the pope. And so in going backwards and forwards to Rome, not then a journey of ten days, but of three months, we can easily see how months and years might be disposed of. While the king's treasury was the only gainer, the diocese or monastery was the loser. No wonder that chapters were always so disposed to rebel against their bishops, for by these long intervals of anarchy they acquired habits of independence. When he did come, and attempt to exercise his legitimate authority, they looked on him as a usurper, an intruder.

All these evils of the practice were set forth by the archbishop in a complaint addressed to the holy see, in which he prayed that a custom so ruinous to the Church might be put an end to; and proposed that when a church of any description had lain vacant six months, the archbishop of the province should be empowered to fill it up himself. Nothing could appear more reasonable; the pope seemed to consent, and S. Edmund thus had fair hopes of gaining for the English Church this, the last article, necessary to complete the freedom, which S. Thomas and Stephen Langton had so hardly earned. But the court of Rome waited for advices from Otho. He suggested that such a bull would alienate the king, whose revenue it would touch. And Henry was so excellently disposed towards the pope, and so ready to attend to the suggestions of the legate, that it would be a pity to offend him. This, which was certainly sensible and sound policy, prevailed at Rome; the letters which had been actually issued were recalled, and the archbishop's petition set aside.

<sup>8</sup> Per cavillatores quos ad hoc tenuit conductitios. Par.



The consequence of this at home was, that the archbishop was looked upon as a defenceless prey, whom every one might attack and plunder that would. Enemies he could have none personally ; but there are some men whom the mere passive resistance of the weak enrages, and who are indignant that they are not sufficiently quiet under injury. Nobles and barons invaded the property and privileges of the see, as if they had a right to them. The Earl of Arundel took possession of a manor, the wardship of which fell by right to the see of Canterbury. Even Hubert de Burgh, whom Edmund had been the means of restoring to the king's favour, turned upon him. The Earl of Arundel appealed to Rome, and the archbishop was cast.

Another victory was gained over him by the convent of Rochester. John had made over to Stephen Langton the patronage of this see.<sup>9</sup> That is, not that he had given the archbishop the nomination of this suffragan, for that was not the king's to give ; but he had assigned to the metropolitan all the rights over the see of Rochester that were the king's. The archbishop was henceforth the lord or patron of this ecclesiastical fief ; was to give investiture of the temporalities, or regalia, as they were called, when they belonged to the king ; to have the custody of them during vacancy ; and to him were to be done all the services which had been done to the king. A vacancy happening at this time, the chapter elected Richard of Wendover. The archbishop refused to confirm the election ; the chapter appealed ; and after the suit had been three years pending, sentence was given against the archbishop.

<sup>9</sup> See the writ in *Anglia Sacra*, i. 386.

The monks returned victorious,<sup>4</sup> the archbishop submitted, and consecrated Wendover with his own hand.

An anxious part of the archbishop's duties was the state of the old monasteries. The greater part of the larger and more important monasteries in the kingdom were of old foundation, and filled by what were then called, from their dress, Black monks. We call them Benedictines, to distinguish them from the various later Orders introduced since the Conquest. But we should have a false notion of them if we supposed that they observed, or were under, the rule of S. Benedict immediately. That might be the form and prototype of their rule, but in fact each separate house was regulated by its own set of rules, the growth of time and usage, or rather lived according to usage and custom, without any code or written rule. They were Benedictines only because they were not Cistercians, Præmonstratensians, or of any of the later Orders. Now the Cistercians, as is well known, were merely a revival of the original rule of S. Benedict, and nothing more. So that if the Black monks had had any title to the appellation of Benedictines, they must have been nearly identical with the Cistercians—Cistercians in a black gown. But nothing could well be more different. The Black monks never thought of themselves as in the same class of persons, as congregated under one roof for the same purpose, as the newer Orders. It was not that flagrant misconduct and immorality prevailed in these establishments. There were cases of such no doubt, and that in religious houses of every class, new and old; but these were the exceptions and not the rule; and they were abhorred by all,

<sup>1</sup> Redierunt cum summa victoria. Edm. de Hadenham, Anglia Sac. ii. 349.

and punished accordingly. Even in the sixteenth century, when discipline was still more lax, the visitors had to stretch falsehood and exaggeration to the utmost to make out their case, and to give a colouring to their sacrilege, by establishing the charge of immorality against the monks in general. And in the thirteenth century this was still further from being the case. It was a less tangible, and therefore more hopeless species of corruption that had invaded the older houses. They were not debauched, far from it ; but they seemed to have quite forgotten the original notion of a monk, and the primitive intention of the cloister. Or rather they had not forgotten it : they knew very well what it was ; they read Cassian and Sulpicius Severus ; but they looked upon all this as no longer applicable to their times and circumstances. Nay, the rule of S. Benedict itself was not forgotten, it was read on certain days in chapter. Many of the more important ordinances, and a still greater number of the minute and circumstantial directions were kept to the very letter. And for such as were not kept, immemorial usage to the contrary, founded on a good reason, would have been alleged at once to an objector. So that no one's conscience was troubled, and no sense or perception of inconsistency between their practice and their profession remained. When, in 1249, Innocent the Fourth sent round certain questions or injunctions to the abbeys in England, most of them could have confidently answered with that of S. Alban's, to each article "*Observatur ;*" "*Observatur per omnia.*" But we can understand by the example to the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, how this might be true, how the rule might be kept, and yet the whole spirit of the monastic life might be fled. In a great part of the colleges, as at present conducted, very much,

much more than is often thought, of the letter of the statutes is kept, when nothing of the spirit of the original foundation remains. The fellows are now independent gentlemen, drawing a private income from the common estate, which they spend as they like ; but the foundations were for poor students to live in common under the absolute control of their head. So monasteries had been founded for the supernatural life of prayer and praise, aided by severe bodily mortification. They had become comfortable homes, in which priests lived much in the ordinary way, a regular, sober, easy, unlaborious life. It is true they had to rise early, had poor fare, little flesh meat (at least in well-regulated houses), were much confined to the limits of the cloister, and in other respects enjoyed less liberty of action than the secular clergy. But we must take into consideration, first, the compensations which are to be set against these constraints, such as their freedom from toil and care, the pleasures of literature, and the satisfaction which an innocent, peaceful, and religious life confers. And, secondly, we must compare the life of the monk with that of the class from which they came outside the walls of the cloister; in comparison of which it might be considered one of comfort, and often of luxury. The conventual dinner of salt fish and vegetables, though carefully dressed and neatly served, seems little inviting ; but it was more and better than many of the brethren had often been accustomed to as children at a yeoman's board. The habit was coarse, and plain, and inconvenient ; but it was better than tatters. The offices might be long and sometimes wearisome ; but a day's thrashing or ploughing was much more laborious. No wonder that a "monachatus," a monk's place in an abbey of much less wealth and splendour than Canterbury or S.

Edmund's, was an object of ambition among a numerous class. If one felt an inward call to a religious life, there were the Cistercian and Carthusian houses, or, at the time we are now speaking of in particular, there were the new Orders of the friars; but the black hood was very eligible from motives of a much more worldly character. There was no harm in their attachment to an easy, comfortable life, but it was not the object of their institution, nor was it this which entitled them to be called Benedictines. If, then, to recur to a former illustration, we try to imagine the probable effect if an archbishop of Canterbury were to announce his intention of visiting the several colleges and halls which are subject to the visitation of one or more of his suffragans, and that with a view not only to inquire rigidly into how statutes framed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were observed, but how far the spirit in which a Wykeham or a Waynflete drew up those statutes, was kept alive; he, the visiting archbishop, being one reputed equal or superior in austerity and holiness to Wykeham or Waynflete — if we try to imagine how such a proposal would be received by those most concerned, how wild, impracticable, and chimerical it would appear, we may have some idea how the Black monks were affected when they received intimation that S. Edmund proposed visiting the abbeys in the diocese of London, on the ground that the bishop of London was remiss in the execution of that part of his pastoral functions. The alarm was great, for if the legate had attempted to enforce that obsolete clause of the rule of S. Benedict,<sup>2</sup> which absolutely prohibited the eating of animal food,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Reg. S. Ben. c. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Carnium quadrupedum.

what other forgotten clauses might the archbishop be expected to call their attention to?

But their fears were soon removed. The bishop of London stepped in. He considered his jurisdiction invaded by this proposal, and appealed to Rome, pleading that a metropolitan could not visit the monasteries in his suffragan's diocese, where the suffragan was not remiss in visiting himself. It seemed thus a question of canon law; but it was not so, nor was it even a question of fact, as to whether the bishop did visit his monasteries, but, in reality, it was one of opinion, as to what might be considered remissness. And this was one in which S. Edmund was sure to be in a minority. On whatever ground, sentence was given against him, and the monks were saved.

Edmund was not quite singular, however, in his views respecting the old monasteries. It was an object much at heart with the good prelates of the time to revive the severity of discipline in them. The bishop of Lincoln, the famous Grosseteste, at the same time, made a similar attempt to visit (for that was the form the question took) the chapter of Lincoln, or, as Matthew Paris expresses it, "turned to molest and persecute the monks."<sup>4</sup> They claimed to be visited only by the dean, and considered this a most ungrateful return of the bishop for their favour in electing him, and they told him publicly that they bitterly repented having raised him from among themselves thus to tyrannize over them.

Edmund was in much the same situation with respect to his own chapter at Canterbury. He had laid an interdict on their church, which they neglected,

<sup>4</sup> Factus est malleus et immanis persecutor monachorum.

on the ground of having appealed to Rome against it, where the cause was still pending. They looked upon themselves as aggrieved, as wantonly attacked by him.<sup>5</sup> Thus he was surrounded by enemies, who insulted his weakness and despised his efforts on behalf of the Church. Yet to all he exhibited outwardly the same gracious and benign deportment, behaving even to those who did him most wrong with the utmost charity and tenderness. He admitted all, even to the kiss of peace. Some of his friends told him that he carried this too far, that he made no distinction in favour of such as remained friendly to him. "Why should I offend God," he answered, "and lose the charity which I owe them? If any were to pluck out my eyes or cut off my arms, they ought to be dearer to me on that account, and would more deserve my compassion for the sin which they had committed in their ignorance." Tribulation, he said, was like the wild honey on which John the Baptist fed in the wilderness, bitter at once and sweet. He says in his "Mirrour,"<sup>6</sup> "If we were good, we should have no friends but the good, no enemies but the bad. We ought to love the good because they are good, and the bad because they might be good; and so we shall love all men for the sake of goodness."

He made a last attempt, accompanied by some of his suffragans, to influence the king. But what could be expected from a man who would promise anything, with tears and regrets for the past, to such an application, but, as soon as the archbishop had quitted his presence, would forget both his sorrow and his promises. Henry

<sup>5</sup> Aggravavit Ædmundus manum suam super monachos suos. Matt. Par.

<sup>6</sup> Cap. 30.

was at this time entirely in the hands of his wife's kinsmen; and the whole case is shortly expressed by Robert of Gloucester:—

He drou to other conseil than he was iwoned to do,  
And of the rigtes of holi church, and of the gode old lawe  
That he adde of is chartre ymad, he him gan withdrawe,  
Saint Edmund pitosliche and ofte him besougte  
That he withdrawe of is dede and bet him bethogte.  
Ac it was ever the long the wors.

And they always had the legate to support them, with whose countenance how could it be thought that anything was amiss? Among other things, a papal brief arrived at this time, addressed to the archbishop and the bishops of Lincoln and Salisbury, ordering them to provide for three hundred Roman clergy out of their first vacant benefices, and suspending them from collating to benefices till that number was provided for.

The archbishop was now thoroughly weary of his office. He saw that he could do nothing as he wished, and as he knew he ought to do it. His reforms were merely ridiculed, set aside without question, or even opposition; all men were agreed that they were fanciful, unpractical schemes. He was in the difficult situation of one who finds himself called to obey, in a public station and in his public acts, a law which none of those about him recognize, which they smile at as over-scrupulousness. An ordinary person, under such circumstances, will yield, if not in all, in some respects, or make a compromise, by surrendering something for the sake of retaining the rest. It seems impossible to him that he alone can be right, and every one else in the wrong. Besides this, the influence of the opinion of those with whom we habitually converse, though



imperceptible in its progress, is yet one of the most certain to which we are subjected. But the Saint has another sort of certainty of the truth of what he has learned, of the inflexible nature of the rule he has lived by. It would be unbelief in him to yield or to compromise ; it would be parting with what is not his to give away. It is not for himself or his own objects that he is contending. Particular points in dispute he will readily resign, but fall into the way of thinking and acting of the world around him he cannot. Thus S. Edmund now saw that all resistance was hopeless ; its edge was turned by the shield of careless contempt. The men who opposed him had no thought of whetting the spirit of the better class of churchmen, and kindling an opposition, by violent or active measures, against the reformer ; they merely neglected him. They did not want to persecute him ; they only wished to go on peaceably in their own way, as they had done before. While, on the other hand, he saw that, if he stayed and was silent, he could not avoid being considered to acquiesce in, if not to approve, what was being done before his eyes.

But it is not an improbable conjecture that he may have had a special call to act as he did, in withdrawing from the kingdom ; perhaps of such a nature as a vision he had after his resolution was taken, but before he quitted Canterbury. S. Thomas the Martyr appeared to him, and seemed to offer to him encouragement and consolation. Edmund attempted to kiss his feet, but the vision forbade this, and withdrew them from Edmund's approach, which caused him to weep, as not being thought worthy to touch the blessed Saint. But, said S. Thomas, "Weep not, thou shalt shortly kiss, not my feet, but my face." At another

time, it seemed to him that he had entered the church of Canterbury for the purpose of prayer at the Martyr's shrine, and that S. Thomas appeared to him, and, with a gracious countenance, said, "I know, father, that thy wish is that I should show thee the wounds in my head." At these words, he seized Edmund's hand, and, passing it over his head, allowed him to feel the scars of the wounds, stooping down for the purpose.

When about to set out, he communicated the secret of his departure only to a few of the religious, whose hearts he knew. They asked him, at once, if his destination was Pontigny. "Yes," said he, "to Pontigny we go; and there, if it please God, shall we work all good works." This, taken in a different sense from that in which it was probably spoken, they understood afterwards as prophetic of the miracles he was to perform after death. Other instances of a foresight almost prophetic had occurred before, in intimations he had given to Albert, archbishop of Armagh, and William, bishop of Winchester, of the issue they should obtain out of certain troubles in which they were involved.

His departure from London resembled a secret flight.<sup>7</sup> On a rising ground, from which was a view of the city, he halted, and turning towards it, he gave his solemn blessing to his country, and his curse on the sacrilegious marriage of the Countess de Montfort and its offspring.<sup>8</sup>

He experienced fully the truth of that, a prophet is not without honour save in his own country. When he arrived in France, he was met at Senlis (department of the Oise) by queen Blanche, the mother of S. Lewis.

*Clandestine et quasi fugiens.* B.

<sup>8</sup> *Super monticulum prope civitatem Londoniæ.* Chron. Lanercost.

She brought her sons with her, commending them and herself to his prayers, and begging his blessing for them. The interview was long and affecting. She besought him most earnestly to stay with her, to do that for France which he had not been permitted to do for England, that the realm might be governed by his counsel.<sup>9</sup> But he was flying from the courts of princes, and did not want only to exchange one for another, great though the difference was between Henry's riotous brothers-in-law and the children of queen Blanche. His heart was set upon Pontigny. But he promised, at the pious queen's request, that the kingdom of France, and the welfare of the king, should never be forgotten in his prayers. And so he took his leave, and hastened on to Pontigny.

<sup>9</sup> *Exposuit nutui suo regnum Francorum.* Jul. D. vi. (2).

## CHAPTER IV.

## EDMUND AT PONTIGNY.

FAR away in Burgundy, about ten miles to the left of the high road, whose undeviating line pierces through that province on its way to Lyons, stood this famous abbey. It was in the territory of the counts of Champagne, and formed the extreme northern point of the diocese of Auxerre. The Serain, a stream which washes the cloister walls, inconsiderable in size, yet formed the limit of so many different jurisdictions, that a popular saying was current, that three bishops and an abbot might dine on its bridge, without quitting their respective territories. The bishops were those of Auxerre and Langres, with the archbishop of Sens and the abbot of Pontigny. When Hugh of Macon first conducted hither his twelve monks from Citeaux (in 1114), it was a savage wilderness, penetrated only by the seigneur in the pursuit of his game. But a century and a half, and the labour of the Cistercians, had brought the neighbouring country by the middle of the thirteenth century, into much the condition in which it is at the present day. The monks had ceased to labour themselves, but they had introduced the vine for which those sunny slopes seem purposely created; a small village of peasant dependants had grown up under their protection, and a laughing country rich in corn and wine spread around the abbey in a circle which was widening

every year. The traveller who finds his way to this, once again, obscure spot, whether he approach it from the north or the south, from Troyes or from Auxerre, beholds at a distance, on a slightly rising ground, the still imposing mass of the conventual church. Simple and wholly devoid of ornament, like all the Cistercian churches, in the architecture of the twelfth century, it has three peculiarities which, united, produce the most singular effect. These are, its long, plain line of high-pitched roof of slate, unbroken to the eye by battlement or finish of any sort ; the absence of all tower or bell-turret ; and, above all, the uniformity of its style, the whole, nave, choir, sanctuary, and transepts, having been raised at one time, by one effort, and on one and the same plan. It is, perhaps, one of the most perfect monuments remaining of the original and rustic spirit of Citeaux. And it alone remains, the work of the pious Thiebault, count of Champagne, carrying us back at once to the apostolic age of monasteries ; while all that represented later times of degeneracy, the sumptuous and magnificent range of buildings that covered acres, and revealed the sad tale of the victory of the world over faith ; that spoke of commendatory abbots, of vast revenues acquired by simony and spent with ruinous prodigality ; all this is swept away as though it had never been. We do not regret that they are gone, they were intruders upon holy ground. Dom Nicholas de Chanlatte, with his revenue of sixty thousand francs, and grand abbatial lodge ; the rendezvous of the elegant society and choice spirits of the regency ; the model of courtesy and good taste ; the admirer of Voltaire.<sup>1</sup> All these are past like a dream,

<sup>1</sup> At its suppression, in 1790, the abbey of Pontigny had thirty

or like one of those cavalcades of spectres which the mirror of the magician professed to exhibit to the awe-struck gaze of the spectator ; and we seem to awaken to truth and life when we see the two or three priests of the mission, in primitive poverty and humility, amid the dirt, damp, and squalid ruin that surrounds them, witnessing to the indestructibility of the faith in the presence of an unbelieving generation ; and reduced to pray almost alone at the forsaken altars, for a population that has ceased to pray for themselves.

But neither the magnificence of the eighteenth, nor the melancholy desolation of the nineteenth, nor what was the actual prospect that offered itself to his eyes in the thirteenth century, viz., the rich cultivation of valley and plain, were what drew S. Edmund to Pontigny. Indeed, it is little probable that he noticed its outward attractions. After a life spent in mortifying the senses, there is little room or disposition in the Saint's mind, even for that refined indulgence of them which we call admiration of nature. S. Bernard, after walking for a whole day amid the most glorious scenery in the world, on the shores of the lake of Geneva, when one in the evening spoke of the lake, astonished his companions by asking, where the lake was ? And so ever with the Saints, on their slow and tedious journeys, while the mouth was occupied with the psalms, and the thoughts with God, vineyard, meadow, and orchard, forest and cultivated field, passed by unnoticed and undistinguished. Pontigny was to Edmund an abode of silent mortification,

dependent houses ; a revenue of 74,000 francs, and a debt of 348,000. In 1750, Dom Grillot, the predecessor of Dom Chanlatte, pulled down the abbot's lodging, and substituted one on a much grander scale, in the style of the rich and massive chateaux of the time. *Histoire de l'Abbaye de Pontigny. Auxerre, 1844.*

where he might return again to his old life of Merton or Stanley, and have again the company of Cistercians, which had been ill-exchanged during six years for that of his rebellious monks of Christ Church. It was sanctified by the presence of Becket and Langton, and a host of their companions in exile ; it kept up a sort of connexion with England, and was even bound to himself by the tie of gratitude, having received from him, only two years before, the grant of an annual pension.<sup>2</sup>

He was received by the monks with becoming honour and reverence<sup>3</sup>. He was lodged at first not in the cloister, but close by, in a separate house, the very same, or on the same ground, as that which S. Thomas had occupied for six years. But he did not long continue here. He did not want the luxury and state of a private abode, with its fair and privy chambers, or what seemed such to a monk of Pontigny.<sup>4</sup> He did not wish to be treated as archbishop. At the request of the abbot he preached to the convent ; and after his sermon he begged of the monks one boon in return, that they would take back their house, which they had assigned him in their hospitality, and would admit him within the walls of the convent on the footing of a brother. It may be supposed how readily he obtained this. He was especially anxious

<sup>2</sup> In 1238 S. Edmund confirmed the grant of fifty marks made by Langton, adding ten marks more from himself. The sum was to be paid out of the tithes of the church of Rumenall. (Cart. Pont. ap. M. & D. iii.) Richard the Second secured by writ the payment of this pension, not to be interrupted (as it had been) by the war which threatened to break out afresh between the two kingdoms. And it continued to be paid till the Reformation under Henry the Eighth. Hist. de Pontigny, ut sup.

<sup>3</sup> Cum summo, ut decuit, honore et reverentia. Jul. D. vi. (2).

<sup>4</sup> Cum cameris honestis et arcanis. Id.

that no distinction should be made in his favour, but that he should be treated like one of the rest. Only it was allowed that one or more of the brethren might exclusively attach themselves to him more particularly than was allowed by their rule among themselves. He did not enter the Order, nor resign his secular dignity ; perhaps his humility made him shrink from doing what might have been thought by many too conspicuous an act. For an archbishop of Canterbury to have become a Cistercian monk could not but have surprised men. Langton in his despair, had thought of doing so, but had abandoned the idea.

His life at Pontigny was such as it had been of old. Some of his time he employed in writing the *Speculum Ecclesiæ* ; at others he went out to preach in the neighbourhood, in the same way as the other monks did.

After nearly two years spent in this retirement his strength began to fail him ; not from old age, for it was hoped that removal to another air would recover him. The heat of Pontigny was what he was not accustomed to. The physicians advised him to go to the Priory of Soissy, near Provins. S. Edmund, however, was not deceived, he knew that his end was near. When the monks were grieving at his departure, he said to them, to cheer them, ‘I will return on the feast of S. Edmund the king, (November 20,) the summer heats will have by that time past away.’ And he kept his word. For on the 20th, his body was brought for burial to Pontigny. He died at Soissy on the 16th. The faithful monk who had long attended him, accompanied him thither, and was the witness of his last hours. Mindful of that, ‘while we have time let us do good unto all men,’ he was more than ever solicitous to give abundant alms. On his road to Soissy, he gave something with his own hands to every



poor man whom he met. His last strength was expended in going frequently to his door at Soissy and giving alms to the poor pilgrims who passed it. And when he could no longer quit his chair, he assigned this duty to one of his chaplains, bidding him give one, two, or three livres, as he should see occasion, to the traveller, and to take as much as was needed for the purpose out of his chamber.

One day the abbot of S. James' of Provins, wishing to offer something to the archbishop, brought him some stewed quinces, such as are prepared for sick persons; but he refused them, saying, 'it is now many years since any food calculated to please the palate, entered my mouth.'<sup>5</sup>

When he was about to partake of the Last Sacrament, and the Body of the Lord was brought to him, he stretched out his hand towards it as if to invoke it, and said in a tone of confidence,<sup>6</sup> 'Thou, Lord, art He in whom I have believed, whom I have preached, whom I have truly taught; and Thou art my witness that while I have been on earth I have sought nought else besides Thee. As thou knowest that I will only what thou willest, so now I say Thy will be done, for all things are in Thy power.' After receiving the viaticum he was filled with a joy inexpressible, which he strove to express in his native tongue, 'Men say that joy goeth into the belly, but I say it goeth into the heart.'<sup>7</sup> After extreme

<sup>5</sup> The Lambeth MS. (No. 135) resembles throughout the life by Bertrand. But there is a variation here which almost seems to denote a different author. The latter says, 'Cum recolendæ recordationis Abbas S. Jacobi de Provino ad comedendum cocta porrexisset coctana.' The Lambeth MS. has 'Cum Abbas Sancti Jacobi de Provino, vel Prior de Soysi, quis eorum memoriæ non occurrit.'

<sup>6</sup> Cum ingenti fiducia. B.

<sup>7</sup> Men seid game god in Wombe, ac ich segge non, game gad on herte.

unction he asked that the crucifix, with the images of S. Mary and S. John, should be placed somewhere in his sight. It was brought to him. He took it with tears and groans, and kissed it ; and then taking some wine mixed with water which he had ordered to be made ready for this purpose, he washed with it all the wounds of the figure, and then drank the liquid in which he had washed them, repeating the text, 'ye shall drink water from the fountains of salvation.' This revival of a custom obsolete, and despised as childish, by so great a man, astonished his attendants.<sup>8</sup> He retained to the last his dislike of a bed, and remained seated, till death actually seized him, when he stretched himself on the ground, so long his only couch,<sup>9</sup> and yielded up his pure and holy soul without a struggle to heaven. This was on the morning of Friday, November 16th, 1242.

Every one about him was aware what it was that had taken place ; that a saintly soul had entered upon bliss, and that a saintly body was bequeathed to earth. The only fear of the abbot of Pontigny, who was with him when he died, was that Pontigny should not have the honour of the confidently expected miracles. In all the towns through which the body passed, such crowds thronged to meet it, and at least to touch the bier, that the bearers were obliged to call in the aid of the authorities to clear the way before they could approach the church in which it was to rest for the night. His promise or prediction was fulfilled to the letter, for on the very day he had fixed, the feast of S. Edmund the King, his own birthday, his body reached Pontigny. In the

<sup>8</sup> Defæcatæ devotionis insolitum morem. B.

<sup>9</sup> Super sibi familiarem stratum recubans, scilicet super duritiem nudæ terræ. Id.

acquisition of this treasure, another prediction was considered by the monks to have its fulfilment. When S. Thomas was leaving the monastery to return to Canterbury, he expressed his regret on taking leave of the monks, that he was not able to repay them for their hospitality. But he added, "God will send me a successor, who shall discharge this debt for me." The pension of fifty marks which Langton had given, was intended in this light ; but now they were more amply repaid by the possession of S. Edmund's body.

For now began a series of miracles, the like of which had perhaps never been seen in this part, at least, of the Western Church, since S. Martin ; but which in the thirteenth century were certainly without parallel ; and this, whether we regard their number, their nature, or the evidence on which they rest. As to their number, seventeen distinct cures were proved by the witnesses before the consistory in order to his canonization. These had been wrought in the six years which intervened between that event and his death. One hundred and ninety-five are enumerated with particulars, in the catalogue which was kept at Pontigny, and which appeared to have been all entered within half a century after his death. But the series was not closed in the seventeenth century. So late as 1672 and 1673 two *procès verbaux* were taken attesting the resuscitation of two still-born children at his tomb.<sup>1</sup> But even this vast number, of which the details were preserved, were considered specimens, and not a full and complete catalogue. And as to their nature, if many of them resemble the miracle of 1672, where a child, still-born, was taken to the tomb of the Saint, and after remaining two hours

<sup>1</sup> Hist. de Pontigny, p. 105.

stretched upon the stone shewed signs of life, but died not long afterwards ; if some of them want that distinct and decisive character which few facts of any sort have, yet, on the other hand, in a great many of the instances given, it is this very distinct and wonderful character which constitutes the main difficulty to our receiving them. For example, thirty of the number are cases of persons raised from the dead. But all objection must be silenced by the nature of the evidence, which is so full, complete, and satisfactory, that all history might as well be rejected if these are to be. We have spoken of that impression of truth which the life of S. Edmund gives, as being written by a contemporary, and an intimate friend. It is so biographical and homely ; minute, though not copious in details, we almost forget that its subject lived six centuries ago. It has not the legendary antique, classical air, remote from our active sympathies, that the Lives of the Saints in general have. This is applicable especially to his miracles. They take their place in the full broad daylight of history, and rank among the other events of the age. They do not lurk in the gloom of the church, or hide themselves within the walls of the cloister. For they fall in an age when suspicion had been awakened, when the probability was beginning to turn against miracles, as it had been in favour of them ; when reason so keenly exercised in the schools demanded that her doubts should be satisfied ; and when the sifting processes of the courts of law were already applied to this very inquiry. And the opposition to S. Edmund's canonization was long and obstinate. Dying humble and neglected and without a party, he might have been forgotten on his death beyond the circle of his immediate friends, but for the weight of his miracles, which seemed to take the kingdom of heaven

by violence. Indeed there had been found detractors in his life who had denied his virtues. His asceticism had been called superstition; his zeal for justice, harshness; his affability, talkativeness.<sup>2</sup> Nay, he had not even escaped the charge of covetousness, for being obliged to economize to relieve the See of Canterbury of the debt which Langton had incurred on occasion of S. Thomas's Translation, and being besides little inclined to splendid shows and feasts, he had been accused of parsimony as archbishop.<sup>3</sup> It is true that this was the language of those who grudged that what he spent in alms to the poor, was not spent in feasting the rich.<sup>4</sup> But those who judged thus were the majority. Thus public opinion represented him. And though his virtues were known and appreciated among those who judged by the standard of the Church, yet it was not without some surprise and incredulity that the first news of the wonders that were taking place at Pontigny were received at Rome. The opposition there encountered is thus described by archbishop Albert. "So great was the contradiction and sinister interpretation which our pious business (of procuring the canonization) met in the court of Rome, from the senior and influential persons of the court, that all that was said or written to them concerning his miracles was received as the wildest fanaticism. I myself heard a cardinal holding the following language, 'You are losing your time and labour; we do not, to say the truth, believe your stories of miracles. In fact the age

<sup>2</sup> Malignâ interpretatione conati sunt impii obfuscare. Jul. D. vi. (2.)

<sup>3</sup> Archiepiscopatus ære alieno ad vii. millia marcharum obligatus exitit, quem præterea totaliter in stauro destitutum reperit. B.

<sup>4</sup> In divites vel histriones effundere quod acceperat pauperibus erogandum. Id.

of miracles and tongues has long passed away, and we have given up setting the sanction of the Holy See to them, and only attend now in inquisitions of canonization to the merits of the party, to such works as are to appear in the judgment at the great day. As far as my own opinion goes, were it not that the general church has received the history and legend of S. Martin, I would say that I do not believe that that Saint raised three persons from the dead. For I cannot think that our Lord Jesus Christ, who while on earth himself only restored three persons to life, would have granted so great a privilege to one of his servants.' This very cardinal, afterwards sent into France as legate of the Holy See, visited Pontigny; and being convinced of his error, made a public confession of it, prostrate on the ground at the entrance of the church, and saying, 'They who slandered thee shall draw near to thee, and shall adore the prints of thy footsteps.' And to make a fuller satisfaction, he set up three altars in the same church, consecrating them in the honour of Blessed Edmund associated with other Saints. But when all this opposition was made, partly by England, partly by the sacred college itself, our lord the pope refused to grant his approbation. And all the friends and procurators of the business were in despair. And well they might. For three or four times had the inquiry been gone through; our Saint's miracles had passed through fire and water, and not the least blemish could be thrown upon them. And yet it was still said that the process must be gone through again, that more witnesses must be produced."<sup>5</sup>

The result of this was that the archbishop's faithful attendant Bertrand, to whom we owe the life of the Saint

<sup>5</sup> *Historia Canonizat.* M. & D. iii. 1847.

that has been so much quoted, was despatched again to England and Pontigny to obtain further proofs. The inquisition had been conducted in England by Richard bishop of Chichester, the prior of Canons Ashby, and Robert Bacon the Dominican. A new commission was now issued to the bishops of London and Lincoln. Bertrand visited Canterbury, Oxford, and Salisbury, and all the places where Edmund had lived, both in England and France, and returned laden with certificates from all those who had known him, and with evidence of fresh miracles, which silenced objection. He brought out of Burgundy several persons who had been cured, who were taken to the houses of the cardinals, and strictly examined as to the nature of the disease they had laboured under, and the medical means used. At last all doubts were removed, and all difficulties overcome. On the Sunday preceding the Christmas day 1246, the ceremony of the canonization took place in the cathedral church of Lyons. For the Papal court was for the time transferred to this city on account of the wars in Italy. Hugh, cardinal of S. Sabina, addressed the people, giving a short account of the life of S. Edmund, and recounting some of the principal miracles, which were so well established, that, by the confession of the adverse cardinals, had those of the older saints been submitted to an equally rigid scrutiny, it might be doubtful whether they would have attained to their present place in the Calendar of Saints.

On the 9th of June following (1247) took place the ceremony of the translation. It should have been deferred according to custom, till after the celebration of the feast of the Saint, November 16. But the time was anticipated to allow S. Louis, who was about to leave for the Holy Land, to be present at it. Besides the king, there were present, his mother, Blanche; his three bro-

thers, Robert, count of Artois, Alphonse, count of Poitiers, Charles, afterwards count of Provence and Anjou ; and Isabella, their sister. The presiding bishop was Peter, cardinal bishop of Alba, the bearer of the papal bull ; a host of prelates and abbots, among whom were Richard, bishop of Chichester, who had been S. Edmund's chancellor, and Albert, archbishop of Livonia, his intimate friend, were present. An immense multitude had collected from the neighbourhood to be present on the joyful occasion. A papal dispensation, expressly obtained for this solemnity, opened the precincts of the monastery to women. The church was filled, and the tomb opened in the presence of all. The body was found fresh and entire, with all the hair on the head, as when buried. It was placed by the hands of Guy, bishop of Auxerre, on the high altar, to give all an opportunity of approaching, inspecting, and touching the holy relic. There it remained till evening, when it was removed by way of precaution into the sacristy. This was Saturday, and the deposition in the new situation it was to occupy was deferred till the Sunday. Meanwhile there was no little dispute in the chapter of the abbey, as to the sort of tomb in which it should be deposited. The abbot and prior, faithful to the Cistercian simplicity so conspicuous in the architecture and appearance of their church, had prepared a plain stone coffin.<sup>6</sup> But the greater part of the monks wished for something more rich and ornamental. The night passed in this strife within the walls of the convent, and it was at last determined to refer it to the bishops. But they also differed in opinion ; and as neither side could be convinced, the dispute was at last

<sup>6</sup> Respondentibus quod ordo Cisterciensis in humilitate fundatus humilitatem deberet prætere. Albert. Hist. Can.



determined by the authority of the abbot, and the stone coffin was adopted.

But this did not long retain its place; the prior was removed from his office by the visitors of the abbey, partly for the temper he had shewn in this very dispute; and the abbot not long after resigned. Bertrand, S. Edmund's secretary, succeeded as prior, and one of his first acts was a second translation of the Saint's relics from the stone coffin to a chest, or *chasse*, richly adorned with gold and jewels. This was raised on four pillars of copper, and placed immediately behind the high altar under a canopy highly decorated. Thus it remained till 1749, when it was moved for the last time, and placed in a new *chasse*, carved in wood, in the style of the time, and supported at a considerable height by four angels also in wood.

From the time of this translation, Pontigny became the centre of pilgrimage not only to a large neighbouring district, to the provinces of Burgundy, Champagne, Lorraine, &c., but to the whole of France, and the Low Countries, and, as might be expected, England especially. It became the Tours of the east of France. It was just ten days' journey, at moderate stages,<sup>7</sup> from England; and from its position it became the first halting place at which the English pilgrim reposed on his way either to Rome or to Compostella.<sup>8</sup> And it may easily be supposed that none passed it without a visit. And it was still resorted to down to the very close of the eighteenth cen-

<sup>7</sup> Ab Anglia usque Pontiniacum decem moderatæ numerantur esse diætæ. Albert. Hist. Can..

<sup>8</sup> Situm est in mediculio itineris per quod Romam et S. Jacobum vadunt peregrini. B. This passage has been strangely misunderstood to mean 'half-way between S. James' and Rome.' But a writer of the 13th century knew nothing of a 'court of S. James's' in London.

tury ; and though the church, like all Cistercian churches, was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, it became familiarly known by the appellation of "S. Edmund's."

The devotion of the people is extinct ; pilgrims no longer haunt the shrine ; the church is empty, and the angel no more stirs the waters to heal the sick, the halt, the blind, and the maimed. But the precious treasure itself is still there. While the remains of so many of the Saints have been scattered to the winds, this by a singular Providence, has hitherto escaped.

Twice the Prince of Condé's Huguenots<sup>9</sup> sacked the abbey, and burnt all that would burn in the church, but the monks had hid their prized deposit. Again, at the revolution, a furious mob entered the church, this time sure of their prey. It was there, abandoned to their will. But as they mounted the stairs that led to the shrine, a fit seized their leader, and their hands were stayed. Such at least is the tradition of the place. What is certain is, that the body still rests in its place, and that it has survived so many perils is itself a miracle. It is there—but where is the faith that gave it life and power, that evoked its divine virtue? Is it in vain to pray that God would restore that faith in the Saint's own country ; that England may not for ever thus banish her Saints ; that the time may come, however distant it may now seem, when, as Africa has reclaimed her own Augustine, England may have the right and the wish to recall her Saint, whom, in a fatal hour for herself, she drove from her bosom !

<sup>9</sup> In 1568 and 1569.

## NOTE.

In the Lives of the Saints in English rhyme, a production of the reign of Edward I, is a careful abstract of Bertrand's Life of S. Edmund, containing nearly every particular of that life. The following specimen may be compared with p. 31 of the preceding.

In a time at the gang dawes, this holie man also,  
Prechede a day at Oxenford, ase he ofte hadde i do :  
In Alle Halewene churchyerd ; in the northure side  
With the baneres at onderne ; as men doth alonde wel wide.  
Ase this holie man with all this folke in his prechingue was best ;  
That lodlokeste weder that mighte beo cam al fram bi west,  
Swart and deork and grisliche and overcaste al thene toun.  
The wynd bleoth also swithe grisliche ase the world scholde al a  
doun.

So deork it was bicomme also that men mighte unnethe i se  
Lodlokur weder thane it was, ne mighte nevere be ;  
That folke for drede of heore clothus faste bigonne to fleo.  
Abideth, quath this holie man, ore loved is guod and freo,  
The devel it is that bringuth this weder for to destourbi godes lore  
Ore loved is strengore thane he ne drede ye eou nought to sore.  
He biheold upward toward God and cride him milte and ore  
That he schilde hem from the develes mighte that he ne grefde hem  
nammore,

Tho he hadde iseid is oresun that wedur bigan to glide,  
In the othur half of the Churche al in the southere side ;  
Thare it bigan to falle anon and nolde no leng abide,  
That unnethe thorough the heyge stret mighte ani man go othur ride.  
Ake in the north half of the Churche thare this holie man stod,  
Ne fel nevere a reynes drope for to disturbi a mannes mod,  
In the south half thoruy al the heige strete it leide on for wod :  
That al the stret a watere orn ase it were a gret flod,  
That folk that from the prechingue for drede of the wedere drouy,  
And that wenden bi the heige strete hadden therof inouy,  
Ake huy that bilefden thare druyge and clene were.



LIVES  
OF  
THE ENGLISH SAINTS.

---

St. Richard,  
BISHOP OF CHICHESTER.

---

MANSUETI HEREDITABUNT TERRAM, ET DELECTABUNTUR IN  
MULTITUDINE PACIS.

LONDON:  
JAMES TOOVEY, 192, PICCADILLY.

---

1845.

LONDON

Printed by S. & J. BENTLEY, WILSON, and FLEY,  
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following life of St. Richard is taken from the two lives published in the Bollandists. One of them is anonymous, the other is by Ralph Bocking, a Dominican friar, and the Saint's intimate friend.

The author wishes to add, that circumstances have led to his publishing these pages at a time when he would rather have remained silent. In publishing them, however, he would unconditionally submit them, as well as anything else which he may have written, to the judgment of authority.





THE LIFE OF

**St. Richard.**

---

INTRODUCTION.

THE world, probably, never presented an appearance so Christian as at the opening of the thirteenth century. Never was it so clearly expressed in outward acts, and acknowledged as a principle, that the Church, as the representative of Christ on earth, is the ultimate judge in all matters of right and wrong. The long pontificate of Innocent the Third closed with the fourth Lateran council, the most august assembly which Christendom had witnessed for a great many centuries. In the old basilica of St. John, the presence of the Latin patriarch of Constantinople seemed to fill up the gap which the separation of the Greeks had caused in the Church, while the head of the lately reconciled Maronites, and the deputy of the orthodox patriarch of Alexandria, represented a great portion of the East. In its first decree the council developed further the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, with the same authority as was possessed by the fathers at Nicea ; it then goes on to rule many points of practice, affecting laymen as well as ecclesiastics. It thus implies that Christendom is politically one republic, administered on the supposition that Catholicism is Christianity, and Christianity the only true religion ; and that not only every individual in his intercourse with his neighbour, but every state in its relations with others, as far as

it could be said to have a conscience, and every king in his conduct to his subjects, was to be guided by the laws of Christ and of his Church. Thus the canons extend themselves over marriages and wills, over the distinction between ecclesiastical and civil courts, over church-fiefs and lay-patrons, and the taxes to be paid by the clergy. None can fail being struck with the fairness of the provisions of the council. "We forbid," it says, "all clerks from extending their jurisdiction any further, to the prejudice of the secular court, under pretence of defending the liberty of the Church. Let them be content with written constitutions, with customs which have already received sanction, that 'those things which are Cæsar's be rendered to Cæsar, and those things which are God's be paid to Him by a rightful distribution.'<sup>1</sup> They form a code of laws regulating the relations between Church and state, between the clergy and laity. What, however, is here most important, it implies in its provisions that points of international law come within the jurisdiction of the Church. That to the pope, as the head of Christendom, it belongs to provide for the good of the whole, is a recognized principle. What is now carried on by maintaining the balance of power, and by the law of nations, was then done by the Church. The holy see, in the system of Europe at that time, was considered as the impersonation of divine justice, the ultimate referee in all cases which are out of the common run of things, and for which the law does not provide. As the sanctions by which this code was administered were invisible, so its punishments were only terrible to the eye of faith. The notion that excommunica-

<sup>1</sup> 46 Canon.

tion was a drawing of the spiritual sword, appears senseless to modern ears, but was full of meaning to men who believed that to be excluded from the sacraments was the greatest privation in the world. Every one understood and knew what it meant, even those who knowingly incurred it. Not only emperors and nobles, with their ministers and rude soldiers, but even ecclesiastics, are often found to continue for years under the ban of the Church, refusing to fulfil the conditions by which they might obtain absolution. But then they did it not in unbelief, but with their eyes open, knowing that they were perilling their souls. They knew very well on what terms they could procure absolution. By the provisions of the council, the whole was made a matter of law, so that all men, judges as well as criminals, knew what they were about. In order to restrain churchmen in the use of this terrible weapon, the jurisdiction of each was circumscribed and confined within a certain sphere, beyond the bounds of which it was *ipso facto*, null and void. Several canons provide protection against an unjust sentence, and a punishment to one who had carelessly inflicted it, "for it is no light fault to inflict so great a punishment on a guiltless person."<sup>2</sup>

These are specimens of the code of laws which the mind of Innocent, at once comprehensive and penetrating, provided for Europe. His pontificate is the culminating point of the middle ages. It was the last development of the movement begun in the eleventh century, and, if St. Gregory shines with more saintly

<sup>2</sup> Can. 47. The phrase is so like Innocent, that it is probably from his hand; v. for instance Ep. 98. Lib. 3. Reg. 15.

lustre, in the undaunted faith with which he plunged the world into confusion by throwing upon it great and unearthly principles, Innocent is more majestic, in the fulfilment of his predecessor's vast idea.

That Innocent did fulfil it, is evident from the notion which all men have of him, foes as well as friends. Some praise, and others blame him, but all wonder at his success. All men trembled before the inflexible justice seated on St. Peter's chair. Not a cry against oppression was heard in the remotest corner of Europe, but a legate departed from Innocent's side to demand reparation. His was no partial equity; his allies, as well as his enemies, felt the power of his arm. When wars on all sides were staring him in the face, and he well knew that France was his only support, he fearlessly raised his voice to bid Philip Augustus take back his wife, Ingeburga, the friendless Danish princess, whom he was persecuting. The taking of Constantinople by the Latins was against his express commands; he bade them go straight on to Jerusalem. The son of Raymond, Count of Toulouse, fled to his feet for protection against those who had obtained his inheritance, and Innocent preserved for him that portion which lay on the eastern side of the Rhone.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The story quoted by Michelet from the chronicle of Languedoc about Innocent's blessing young Raymond, of Toulouse, seems very doubtful. The Raymond who is there called a child, was grown up and married, when this is said to have taken place. It is, however, certain, that Innocent in 1212 forbade his legate to deprive Raymond of his inheritance. Ep. 100, 3. Reg. 15. He also took an interest in young Raymond's education. Ep. 210, 3. Reg. 15, and reproved Simon de Montfort for his injustice. 211, (though it is true he was afterwards convinced that Simon was less to blame. Ep. 48. 4. Reg. 16.) Something like what the chronicle asserts may, therefore, have taken place.

In England, also, the moment that John had submitted, he defended him in his rightful dominions against Philip Augustus, whom he had raised up against him, against the barons and against his own archbishop. However high were Innocent's claims, he knew well the distinction between the temporal and spiritual power; and when, for instance, he offered himself as arbiter between the kings of France and England, he said that he did not claim to adjudge a fief, but to judge of an offence against religion.<sup>4</sup> Whatever Innocent was, then, it is at least certain that he proceeded on clear and definite principles, and so posterity is unanimous in the idea which is formed of him, though men differ widely in their judgment upon his conduct. He left behind him a recognized state of things, which was, henceforth, to be the law in Europe. On the other hand, though men have no doubt as to Innocent's personal success, it has been said that its effects soon passed away. If by this it is meant, that the policy of the Church of Rome, in these times, is not the same as that which Innocent pursued, it is of course true. But it is not true that Innocent's work died with him. It remains now in its effects, and it enabled the Church to escape the dangers in which it was placed by the pressure of Mahommedanism from without, as well as by the presence of a Mahommedan spirit within her, in the last princes of the house of Swabia, and still more in the great universities of the day. It did not avail against hereditary sovereigns as it had done against the elective emperors of Germany,<sup>5</sup> but it fulfilled its object in

<sup>4</sup> Honorius says nearly the same thing. Raynald in ann. 1225, 33.

<sup>5</sup> Traces of the rising up of a feeling that the empire was inferior

destroying the dangerous power of Frederic. Entering, as we are now about to do, on the thirteenth century, it will be necessary to see how this state of things affected the churchmen of the time, in order fully to understand the elements which were at work around S. Richard, whose life we are now to write.

The Crusades form one of the great features of this century, as of the last. By this time, however, the holy war had assumed a very different form from that which it bore when Peter the Hermit first roused Europe to take up arms in defence of the holy sepulchre. The first crusaders were actuated by no deep policy when they first flew to the relief of Jerusalem; they followed the natural impulses of religious hearts, when they rushed across sea and land to rescue the place which had been hallowed by the steps of our blessed Lord and by his death. The tears with which the crusaders bedewed the whole of the *via dolorosa*, and the refusal of Godfrey to wear a jewelled crown where his Saviour had borne a crown of thorns, are symbols of the spirit which animated the first crusade. But, simple as were the wishes and the thoughts of these brave soldiers of the cross, it is no less true, that the first crusade "prevented the fall of the declining empire."<sup>6</sup> In process of time, however, Christendom became aware of this, and trembled for its safety. The crusades, therefore, became a series of struggles between the West and the East. It is wonderful, that those who tax the crusaders with folly and fanaticism should never have been struck with the imminent

as being elective, are seen in St. Louis's answer to Pope Gregory, and in the same pope's letter to Frederic. Raynald, in ann. 1239, 39. 1227, 23.

<sup>6</sup> Gibbon's Decline and Fall, c. 59.

danger which for so many centuries threatened Christendom, and with the fact, that the Turks did conquer Constantinople, when the arms of the West no longer kept the Moslems occupied at home. It is forgotten that, in the eighth century, France was only saved by the valour of Charles Martel ; and that, in the ninth, St. Peter's, at Rome, might have become a mosque, like St. Sophia, at Constantinople, had it not been for the faith and the courage of Pope Leo the Fourth. After all the storms of the Saracen invasions were over, the result was, that while the Mahometans were undoubted masters of the East, their permanent establishment in Egypt and Africa pressed close upon Europe, into which they extended by the possession of a large portion of Spain and of Sicily. The danger was as pressing as ever in the days of Innocent, when the decaying race of the Saracens had been invigorated by the infusion of the young blood of the Turks. The retaking of Jerusalem, and the union of the divided empire of the Saracens in the person of Saladin, gave a painful lesson to Christian princes on the disadvantages of their own disunion ; and Innocent's great wish was to unite all Christendom in a holy war. The crusade, therefore, was no longer to be carried on by the desultory devotion or chivalry of individuals, as at first ; a great and combined effort was to be made to retake the Holy City. Like everything else which was great in the world, according to Innocent's idea, worldly valour and skill in arms were to be consecrated by the cross, and to bear on the face of them a Christian aspect. And so in the crusade, which was the carrying out of Innocent's plan, it will be seen that the object was not only to recover Jerusalem, but to break the Moslem power, and to substitute everywhere the cross

for the crescent, that there might be one fold under one shepherd.<sup>7</sup>

Under Innocent, then, the crusade was a part of the policy of Europe. By the canons of the Lateran Council, "universal peace was to reign in Christendom, at least for four years," and all who violated it were to be excommunicated. As for those who refused to join the crusade, the council bade them "consider with what conscience or what security they will appear before the Only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, into whose hands the Father has given all things, if in this matter so peculiarly His own they refuse to serve Him, who was crucified for sinners, by whose gift they hold life, by whose bounty they are preserved, yea by whose blood they have been redeemed." This was Innocent's last work. In his address to the council, he said, "Because to me to die is Christ, and to live is gain, I refuse not, if it be God's will, to drink the chalice of the passion, whether it be my lot to drink it in defence of the Catholic faith, or in aid of the Holy Land, or for the freedom of the Church. And yet I would fain remain on earth till the work which I have begun be finished." He hardly lived to see it begun, for he died the year after he held the council. It is to the manner in which his work was carried on that we would especially direct attention, not in order to give a continuous history of

<sup>7</sup> See the Bishop of Winchester's wish, *Matt. Par.* 472. *Nos cum ad Christi inimicos qui residui remanebunt, venerimus, trucidabimus, et mundabimus terræ superficiem, ut universus mundus uni Catholicæ Ecclesiæ subdatur et fiat unus pastor et unum ovile.* It appears to have been by Innocent's advice that the Crusaders attacked Egypt, and thus extended their operations. *Jacob. de Vit.* lib. iii. in ann. 1218. The same author gives an account of the condition of the East made out at Innocent's desire, in order to be fully aware of the state of the whole of the Mahomedans.



it, but to fix certain landmarks, as it were, by which the reader may know the position of parties during the age in which St. Richard lived.

The man on whom the eyes of the world were fixed as being destined to fulfil the plans of Innocent was Frederic the Second, the youthful emperor of Germany. Born of a family ever in opposition to the Holy See, he had been placed under the wardship of Innocent, had been preserved on the throne of Sicily by him, and at last had been elected emperor by his means, though it had ever been the policy of the court of Rome to separate the kingdom of Sicily from the empire. Frederic was thus the child of the Church ; besides he had vowed solemnly when Honorius the Third put the imperial crown upon his head in the basilica of St. Peter, that he would march to the Holy Land to rescue it from the Saracens. He assumed the cross and the imperial mantle at the same time. Besides which the talents of the new emperor, and the charm thrown around him by his youth, and his high station as the first prince of Christendom, made all the world expect great things from him. Soon after the death of Innocent, the affairs of the Holy Land looked brighter than they had done for many a year. According to the plan traced out by him, the crusaders invaded Egypt, in order to take a wider range in their attack on the Mahometan arms. In 1219, the cross was raised on the walls of Damietta, and the Moslems of Syria and Persia trembled at the news. Much, however, as was the labour of winning the city, it was found harder to keep it. Anxiously did the crusaders look out towards the sea from the walls of Damietta for the coming of Frederic ; " for a long time past," says a letter from the crusaders' camp, " have we waited for the emperor and other noblemen, by whose

coming we hope that this work, begun by so many hands, will have a happy issue. If, however, which God forbid, this our hope of succour be disappointed next summer, our possessions in Syria and Egypt, both those which we have newly acquired, and that which we have long had, will be in danger of being lost."<sup>8</sup> No Frederic, however, came; he sent a fleet, which, by some misfortune, could not join the Christian host; and he assisted the Duke of Bavaria in fitting out an armament, but he was engaged in other work at home, and Christendom threw the blame of the loss of the city upon him.

The crusaders might have waited long for Frederic before he came. The fact is, that Frederic was not the man to carry out Innocent's plans. He was a man far beyond the princes of his time in talents and acquirements, a legislator, a poet and philosopher. His leisure hours were occupied in reading, and the works of Aristotle,<sup>9</sup> which by his order had been translated from Arabic into Latin, were often in his hands. But his views of the duty of a Christian emperor by no means coincided with those of the Church. The unity of Christendom and the triumph of the cross over the crescent were objects only secondary to the extension of the Roman empire, for such in theory was the empire of which he was the head. To recover the dominion<sup>1</sup> which his ancestors claimed over the Lombard cities was the aim of his whole life. The imperial eagle would willingly have flown over to the Holy Land; but he was hovering over the plains of Lombardy, ready to pounce on Milan

<sup>8</sup> Matt. Par. in ann. 1221.

<sup>9</sup> See his letter to the University of Bologna, in Bulæus, vol. iii. p. 103.

<sup>1</sup> *Dominium* was the technical word which he used, and which the Italians rejected. Vide Muratori, *Annali d'Italia*, x. p. 352.

and Genoa.<sup>2</sup> His plans were even wider than this : “ I have sworn, he says, “ as the world knows, to reunite the scattered limbs of the empire ; and I will not be slow in fulfilling my oath.”<sup>3</sup> In his marriages and alliances, he steadily kept his ambitious plans in view. He married the daughter of the king of Jerusalem, and immediately assumed the title of king of Jerusalem in defiance of the right of his father-in-law. He would have had no objection to appear in the East as the acknowledged head of the princes of Europe, and the king of the Holy Land. He is even said to have had views upon England, into which he might have obtained a footing by his marriage with the sister of our weak and unfortunate Henry the Third.<sup>4</sup>

But there was a deeper evil in Frederic’s character, and one which was far more dangerous to Christendom than his ambition. A large portion of Sicily, his native kingdom, was filled with Saracens, at one time, his turbulent subjects, but afterwards his most faithful allies. In this luxurious island, he thoroughly imbibed the voluptuousness of Eastern manners ; and his sensual life destroyed the tone of his mind, and prepared it to receive a more subtle poison. The sight of two religions lying side by side,<sup>5</sup> is a trying thing for a man when his own creed has a loose hold upon him. It was too

<sup>2</sup> Such is Frederick’s own language : “ *Dum tamen pacata nobis Italia, rebus et juribus, quæ proximi parentes nostri tam in Imperio quam in regno pacifice tenuerunt nobis in pace dimissis, alæ nostræ pennas et plumas integrales habeant,*” quibus ad alta conscendere securius valeamus.”—Matt. Par. in 1244, p. 620.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. Par. in ann. 1239, p. 484.

<sup>4</sup> See the curious remonstrance addressed to Henry by his people. Matt. Par. in ann. 1244, p. 623.

<sup>5</sup> In the east, as well as in Sicily, Christians were often brought into dangerous proximity with Mahommedans. Baldwin, prince of

much for Frederic ; and the foundation of his faith was sapped. It must ever remain doubtful, whether he gave utterance to the blasphemies imputed to him, and charity would give him the full benefit of the doubt ;<sup>6</sup> but, at all events, he became the type of the *bel esprit*, the free and easy half-minstrel, half-soldier of the day. Even the thirteenth century had its liberalism, and Frederic was the leader of it. That Christianity was all in all, the true religion, and therefore the only one, was the basis of Innocent's system ; it also implied that the Church was identical with Christianity ; and that to be cast out of the pale of the Church and to lie wilfully under its ban was to cease to be a Christian. In these days there is a middle way, however fallacious, to fall back upon ; but in Frederic's day there was none, and the faith of that man who refused to the Church the power of the keys and treated excommunication lightly was a very doubtful one.<sup>7</sup> And not only was the whole life of Frederic a denial of this truth, but he seems to have made a protest against it a portion of his creed. The majestic posture of the Church annoyed and fretted him, and he tried to escape from it by looking towards

Antioch, proposed to give his own niece in marriage to the Sultan of Iconium, and it appears from his account that many Christian women had married Saracens. Du Chesne, v. 452. The Mahomedans even made converts out of the camp of the crusaders. Dachery, *Spicil.* iii. 590.

<sup>6</sup> Most authors seem to acquit Frederic of the blasphemy of which he was accused. It is strange, however, that Gieseler should attempt to clear him from the charge in living in shameless habits. That he had several natural children is a fact too notorious to be denied ; and the way in which his ambassador at the council of Lyons rebuts the charge is remarkably feeble.

<sup>7</sup> Frederic expressly denied the power of the keys. Vide *Gesta Sti. Lud.* p. 344, ap. du Chesne.

the East. Instead of that oneness of Christianity which was the principle of Innocent's policy, he proceeded in his dealings with the Saracens, practically as if the Christian and Mahomedan religion might subsist side by side. He made an alliance with the Saracens, and talked of his friend the Sultan, and boasted of his influence with him. The great political mistake of this conduct, to say no worse, becomes apparent further on in the history of the century. While the Mahometans were, as it were, knocking at the gates of Christendom, and threatening it on every side, its energies were crippled by the contest going on between the Holy See and the empire. In the very midst of this terrible contest, news arrived in Europe that a foe more dreadful even than the Saracens had arisen in the East; the savage horde set in motion by Zingis Khan poured itself upon the Holy Land. The Carizmians sacked Jerusalem, and profaned the Holy Sepulchre which the very Turks had respected. Nay more, the living tide rolled on to Europe, and the hearts of all trembled within them when it was told that this dreadful scourge was threatening Hungary. And Europe could not unite to oppose them, because the emperor, its natural leader,<sup>8</sup> was lying under excommunication.

This is not the place to enter upon a detailed narrative of the mode in which that sentence was passed upon him. The justice of it was a point debated at the time when it was pronounced;<sup>9</sup> it is enough

<sup>8</sup> It was once an acknowledged maxim—"Imperatorem esse Ducem natum Christianorum contra infideles." Vide Leibnitz de Jure gentium.

<sup>9</sup> St. Louis exhorts the emperor to yield, *etiamsi summus Pontifex esset ad aliqua minus debite processurus*. Gesta Sti. Lud. p. 336.

that the principle involved in the contest was, that the world should be governed on the principles of Christianity, and not on those of a practical scepticism. The patience and long-suffering of the good Honorius bore long with Frederic's dissimulation, and his violation of vows which he had so often and so solemnly renewed. But his successor, Gregory, was a pontiff of a very different character. The energetic old man had hardly been crowned with his double diadem<sup>1</sup> in St. Peter's, when he wrote to Frederic,<sup>2</sup> explaining in his mystical style the insignia of the imperial dignity, how the cross was marked on the golden ball and on the crown, that he might remember his Lord's Passion and the crown of thorns, and serve Him as a Christian prince. Frederic knew too well with whom he had to deal to disobey the summons. There was a general stir in Christendom, and the emperor was to lead the crusade in person. He embarked and set sail; but all on a sudden the Christian world was astonished to hear that the imperial galley had returned, and that sickness had prevented the emperor's proceeding. Forty thousand pilgrims are said to have returned panic struck at the news, and the crusade was frustrated.<sup>3</sup> Men were divided at the time as to the reality of this sickness; but at all events the deed, says Matthew of Paris, turned to the grievous hurt of the business of the Lord. The indignant Gregory excommunicated him; but Frederic, despising the sentence, the next year, with a small

<sup>1</sup> Life of Gregory ap. Maratori.

<sup>2</sup> Raynaldus in ann. 1227.

<sup>3</sup> Gieseler merely says that Frederic was forced by sickness to ask a new respite, without mentioning the doubt whether he really was prevented by sickness, a question which it seems hardly possible now to decide.

retinue, passed over to the Holy Land, and without drawing his sword or putting lance in rest, concluded a peace with the Sultan on principles which were yet unknown to Christendom. The cross and the crescent were to have equal right in the Holy City ; while the Holy Sepulchre was to belong to the Christians, the site of Solomon's temple<sup>4</sup> was given up to the followers of Mahomet. He treated with the Sultan not as a Christian emperor, but as a friendly European monarch ; and "an equal code of civil and religious liberty was ratified" for Christian and Mahometan.<sup>5</sup> Christendom was astonished at this novel union ; and Frederic's conduct seemed to justify the pontiff in the eyes of Europe for an act which had before been condemned as hasty.

From this time to the end of Frederic's long reign, there was but little peace in Christendom. The emperor was once reconciled to the Church, but it did not last long, the old question of the freedom of Lombardy soon divided him from the see of St. Peter. He set himself up as the direct enemy of the Church, appointed bishops as he chose, and levied taxes on the lands of the Holy See in Lombardy and elsewhere. He affected a zeal for apostolic poverty, and talked of reducing the bishops to the state of primitive times. St. Louis, an acute observer, and by no means a personal enemy of Frederic, saw clearly that he aimed at the absorption of the

<sup>4</sup> This means, probably, the mosque of Omar. Muratori seems to think that it may be the Holy Sepulchre ; but that *templum Dei* means the Jewish Temple is plainly marked in Gregory's letter to the Duke of Austria, ap. Raynald. in ann. 1229. Gibbon need not, therefore, have accused the clergy of wilful error.

<sup>5</sup> See Gibbon (*Decline and Fall*, c. 59), who, with his usual acuteness, has seen where the question lay, more plainly than most writers.

Church into the empire.<sup>6</sup> The plains of Lombardy were the battle field on which this great struggle between the Church and the empire was fought. It was of vital interest to the Court of Rome, that the Lombard league should subsist as a barrier between Germany and the Holy See. It was not, however, its interest that an open war should break out between the rival parties in the north. Until, therefore, the time when the breach between the pope and the emperor was beyond any hope of healing, the Court of Rome, though it supported the Lombard league, did its best to keep the peace.<sup>7</sup> When once, however, the scabbard was thrown away and the emperor was deposed, it animated them in every way in its power.

It is melancholy to watch this scene of desolation. It was a war of extermination waged by the Holy See against the house of Swabia. Doubtless Frederic deserved his deposition. By attempting to recover the absolute claim of the empire on Lombardy, he violated the peace of Constance, and what was more, he sinned against the peace of Europe ; he deserved, therefore, to be deposed in the same sense as Napoleon deserved to be sent in exile to Saint Helena. But though there can be little doubt on which side justice lay, yet parties are so mixed and confused, that it is often difficult to recognize the old principles, even of the Church party, in matters of detail. Men wondered to see the court of Rome at one time endeavouring to prevent St. Louis from going on the crusade, while at another it encouraged him ;<sup>8</sup> at one time commuting vows of proceeding to the

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by Fleury, vol. xvii. p. 253.

<sup>7</sup> For a proof of these efforts see Raynaldus in ann. 1233, 36; 1235, 12; 1236, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Gregory the Ninth tried to stop the crusaders, Matt. Par. in ann.



defence of the Holy Land, at another promising St. Louis not to do so.<sup>9</sup> While Gregory the Ninth had an army in his pay to oppose the emperor, called the army of the Church, Innocent the Fourth, on the other hand, disclaims the use of the secular arm.<sup>1</sup> And this was the most distressing feature of the contest; parties swayed to and fro, so that men lost their old landmarks, and knew not where they were. It shook the confidence of men thus to see the energies of the Holy See turned away from the crusade to a struggle with the emperor. The money of the people of Europe, which had been grumblingly bestowed on the holy war, was still more unwillingly bestowed on a war of which they had not faith to comprehend the interest. It seemed to remove the Holy See from its position as the head of united Christendom in its contests with the followers of Mahomet. At the very time when the danger from the infidels was most imminent, the ruthless struggle went on; in vain did St. Louis intercede for peace;<sup>2</sup> it continued to rage even after Frederic's death, till the proud house of Hohenstauffen fell, as it deserved to do, before the Church, of which it was the direct foe, and peace was restored to Christendom by the accession of the good Rudolph of Hapsburg.

It seemed amidst all this perplexity as if Innocent's work was undone. The see of Peter, indeed, is founded

1240, and writes to St. Louis that a crusade against Frederic would be more meritorious, ep. 31, ap. Labbe. Conc. 13.

<sup>9</sup> Compare Raynaldus, 1247, 56; 1248, 13.

<sup>1</sup> Vide Innocent's letter to the chapter of Citeaux, Matt. Par. in ann. 1245.

<sup>2</sup> St. Louis expostulated with Gregory on the excommunication, Muratori, Annali x. p. 354. He mediated also at various times, Mat. Par. in ann. 1246, 1249.

on a rock, and can never fail ; but its action on the nations may be indefinitely weakened at particular times, and it seemed likely to waste its energies in a war which was going on at its gates, instead of leading Christendom to a joint attack on the infidels. But the mission which Frederic had despised was taken up by St. Louis, in whom Innocent's ideal of the Christian knight and king was fully realized. When news arrived in France of the ravages of the Tartars, Blanche of Castile,<sup>3</sup> the queen-mother, came to him in tears, saying that a general destruction threatened the Church on account of the sins of Christendom. But Louis answered cheerfully, "Be of good cheer, mother ; if these Tartars come, either we will drive them back to the Tartarean seats from which they come, or they will send us to heaven with the crown of martyrdom." This was the whole idea of Louis's crusade. He offered up himself as a victim for Christendom, and went to die in Africa with the word Jerusalem on his lips. It would be a tempting thing to make of Louis a hero of romance, but the intense reality baffles all attempts at adornment. In the pages of the brave and religious, but matter of fact Joinville, he appears like a figure drawn by the most imaginative of painters. "By and by," says Joinville, in the midst of one of the battles in Egypt, "I saw the king coming on with all his host, which advanced with a fearful flourish of trumpets, clarionets, and horns. He stopped at an elevated part of the road, with all his men-at-arms, to give some order. And I promise you never saw I so fine a man ; for he appeared above them all, from the shoulders upwards. He had on his head a helmet, which was gilt and very beautiful, and a sword of

<sup>3</sup> Matt. Par. in ann. 1241.

German steel in his hand." And further on he exclaims with rapture, "I assure you the good king did this day greater feats of arms than I have ever seen in all the battles in which I have ever been."<sup>4</sup> But with all this headlong bravery no crusade proceeded on such settled principles as his. He went to Egypt with vessels laden with instruments of agriculture,<sup>5</sup> and with all the means of effecting a settlement. He had, besides, this in view, the universal extension of Christ's kingdom as strongly as Innocent himself. One day during his captivity the sultan saw him looking sad, and asked him the cause. Louis answered, "Because I have not won to Christ thy soul, for the love of which I left my sweet France and my sweetest mother." Then said the sultan "The men of the East thought that for the sake of our lands, not of our souls, thou didst undertake this pilgrimage." But Louis answered, "I call Almighty God to witness that I care not ever to go back to my realm of France, could I but win thy soul and those of the other infidels to Christ."<sup>6</sup> The home policy of Louis was as unworldly as the spirit which led him to assume the Cross; he even wished to give up Normandy to England, from mere scruple of conscience as to the impureness of his own claim. Yet with all this he was a man of considerable powers; he was the author of a code of laws, and France, under his rule, was the best governed country in Europe. Even Frederic feared him, and released some French bishops whom he kept in cap-

<sup>4</sup> Joinville, 43, 45.

<sup>5</sup> Soldanus significavit ironice regi Francorum utquid ligones, tridentes, trahas, vomeres, aratra et alia culture necessaria in partes Orientales, quas non noverat, secum in navibus apportasset si eis uti non curaret, &c. Matt. Par. in ann. 1250.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. Par. in ann. 1252.

tivity, for the wrath of Louis was raised, and the Oriflamme would soon have been displayed before the gates of Cologne. Innocent's attempt to form Christendom into one polity, in which the Gospel should be the code of international law, had at least one martyr. Though the crusade of Louis was a failure, yet we may believe that his long captivity, the insults and sufferings which he endured, and his death far from his realm of France, averted the wrath of God from Christendom, and stopped the progress of the infidels even more effectually than his undaunted courage.

But if Mahomedanism pressed upon Christendom from without, while its energies as a political body were paralyzed by the religious indifferentism of its natural head, another evil, far more terrible and wide-spreading, was sapping the foundations of the faith of the nations ; and this was a species of Mahometanism within the Church itself. The subject is far too wide to be treated at length in a meagre sketch like the present, but the thirteenth century is unintelligible without some notice of the heresies which infested the Church, and of the means which God put into the hands of His Church to heal the disease which, humanly speaking, threatened her existence.

It has been noticed elsewhere that the rationalistic movement of the last century was met by the spiritual writings of the Cistercians, and especially of St. Bernard. Another enemy now invaded the Church, far more systematic in its attacks, and more openly heretical. This was a direct and avowed Pantheism, which, from its affinity with the doctrines of the followers of Mahomet, shows marks both of an historical connection with them, and of the strange sympathy which often develops the same tendencies, at the same time at oppo-

site ends of the world. In the beginning of the century there appear in the universities certain wild doctrines, of an Oriental character. It seems at first unaccountable how such notions should start up in the midst of Europe, as if some secret underground channel had floated them on from Arabia. The forms which they take differ from each other, but all have the same Eastern features. All regard the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity as mere manifestations of the Deity, suited to particular ages ; while some, with a more marked affinity to the doctrines of Islam, misinterpreted our Lord's promise concerning the coming of the Paraclete. The value of the Sacraments was denied, and, as a natural consequence, the relations between our Lord and His Church became in their hands a Pantheistic union of the soul to its Creator. And, strange as it may appear, these tenets had a direct connection with the study of Aristotle, seen as he was through the medium of Arabic commentators. As a natural consequence, therefore, the mass of the intellect of the day was infected with them, and their advocates proceeded on a system which marked their boldness and determination. It was discovered that a society for the propagation of these opinions was organized in the universities of Lombardy, Tuscany, and France ; that they were bound together by oaths, and even aimed at spreading them among the people, by sending men under the disguise of pedlars to disseminate them.<sup>7</sup> Upwards and downwards the disease had spread ; the university of Paris was obliged to limit the number of its doctors in theology to eight, because a great part of them had been corrupted by such heretical notions ; and several persons of low rank were burned at Paris for

<sup>7</sup> Bulaeus, vol. iii. p. 35.

declaring that the souls of all mankind were one, and that if the Apostle Peter was saved, so should they. When it is considered that the whole of the south of France was leavened with Manicheism, had set up an Albigenian pope, and was in arms to defend its heresy, the danger which thus menaced Christendom cannot be exaggerated.

It was very hard to know how to meet this influx of infidelity into the Church, for it was no less. The Church herself seemed to be pausing before she adopted a final course. Her policy in the last century had varied ; first, St. Anselm's writings and example had encouraged the intellectual movement ; afterwards St. Bernard opposed it. The representatives of the three schools of metaphysics<sup>8</sup> were at different times condemned ; but this was on account of errors in theology, and no definite judgment was pronounced as to what was the legitimate use of philosophy in religious studies, though the tendency of the Church was undoubtedly to discourage it. These errors passed away with their authors, two of whom, indeed, retracted them ; but the main question was still undecided, and the danger still continued. Peter Lombard, indeed, attempted to give a direction to the movement by drawing up a system of theology ; but the Book of the Sentences, though by its universal reception as a text-book, it was the commencement of what may be called the official adoption of the scholastic system, was still far too positive for the unruly metaphysicians. Its terms came direct from the Fathers, not from Aristotle ; and when

<sup>8</sup> Roscellinus was a Nominalist ; Abelard, a Conceptualist ; Gilbert, a Realist. Of Abelard, the most popular of the three, John of Salisbury says, that he had few followers in his time. Metalog. 2, 17.

a fresh importation of Aristotle's metaphysics came from Constantinople,<sup>9</sup> the students threw themselves upon them, without waiting for the sanction of the Church. The first news of the danger was conveyed by the appearance of a heresy with Aristotle for its text-book ; and the Church, when it proceeded to condemn the heretic and to burn Aristotle's works, found that the evil had gone too far, and that the whole field of philosophy was already in the hands of the infidels. It seemed as if the world was too strong for the Church. Decree after decree came out, but each was less stringent than the last.

In this state of things, the first check to the infidel party was the spread of the Dominican Order. It planted itself boldly at the head-quarters of the evil, in the midst of the Universities. The Dominican convent was a haven of refuge to the doctor who was wearied with the strife of tongues and the sharp encounter of wits, and still more to the youthful student, whose faith was in peril amidst the mass of opinions about him. At first, the Order was opposed to the introduction of the new school ; afterwards, it seems to have gone with the stream ; and at last God entrusted it with the mission of reconquering for the Church the field of philosophy which the world had well nigh wrested from her. How this was done will be best shown by a refer-

<sup>9</sup> Vide Natalis Alex. Hist. Eccl. vol. iii. cap. 3, art. 2. The general reading of Aristotle seems to have been put too early in scholastic lines. St. Anselm has no trace of it. John of Salisbury complains that few went beyond Boethius and Porphyry. Metalog. 2, 16. 2, 20. fin. He himself only knew the logical books as appears from his referring to the other books second hand. It is doubtful, indeed, whether the physics and metaphysics were known at all till the very end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century.

ence to the Saint who accomplished it. St. Thomas is the representative of the thirteenth century, as St. Bernard of the twelfth.

A more unpromising school than that from which Thomas Aquinas came could hardly be imagined ; his ancestors, the counts of Aquinum, were an ancient and powerful Ghibelline family : they were vehement supporters of the emperor Frederic the Second, and his uncle, one of that emperor's most faithful servants, was married to Anna, his natural daughter. Besides this, the young nobleman was sent to Frederic's university of Naples. He was thus thrown into the very midst of the new philosophy ; every association of his life led him that way, as well as the bent of his mind and the genius of his country, which, as he notices himself, was the birth-place of Pythagoras and the cradle of philosophy. This was a dangerous taste in such an atmosphere as surrounded the university of Naples ; and Thomas fled for refuge to the Dominican Order. His first initiation into Aristotle was in the solitary tower of the fortress of his family at Aquinum, where his brothers had confined him to withdraw him from the Order. His sisters, whose love brightened his prison, brought him a Bible, the Sentences of Peter Lombard, and the Organon, so that his first introduction to Aristotle was in the midst of sufferings, which gave a fresh reality to his religion and left him in little danger of infection. When he afterwards rejoined his Order and was sent to the convent of St. Jacques at Paris, it was in the silence of a heart dead to worldly passions and filled with devotion to God, that the dumb ox of Sicily pondered the questions of the schools. He found Aristotle in the hands of Mahommedan commentators, such as Averrhoes, leading the most acute intellects of the day into infidelity.



But they joined with their scepticism, the wildest Pantheism; while they disbelieved the Church, they put their faith in the most extravagant systems.

Nothing can be better calculated to show the dangers which beset the Church, than a notice of the special system which St. Thomas was called upon to oppose. Wild as were the opinions of the Averrhoists,<sup>1</sup> they were but the natural development of the previous agitation of the schools, ever since the disinterment of heathen philosophy had roused men to reflect on their own minds. To and fro, the schools had gone seeking rest for the sole of a philosophic foot. The object of all the various sects of schoolmen, Nominalists, Conceptualists, and Realists, was one and the same; their aim was to find a criterion by which they might determine how far the external world corresponds to our ideas of it. Their doubts on the subject were the natural result of their undue devotion to dialectics. Logic was with them omnipotent; it was a lever capable of moving the world, if it had but a fulcrum of good substantial certainty; but this was precisely what was wanting. Given the truth of the premisses, they found that they could prove anything; in other words, they could prove nothing till they had previously ascertained the truth, or in modern language, the objectiveness of the ideas of the human mind. And their doubts on the subject even extended to the objects of sense. They soon discovered that while an external object makes a single and individual impression on the senses, the idea by which it appears before the mind is something very different. It

<sup>1</sup> If the system of Averrhoes seems too absurd for confutation, it should be remembered that it reappeared at the time of the Reformation, when it was condemned by Leo the Tenth, fifth Lateran council, sess. 8, p. 842, Labbe. tom. 19.

is the nature of the human mind to form an idea of-an object by passing a judgment upon it. The way in which we recognize its existence, and become conscious of it is by judging it. And we pronounce it to be very different<sup>2</sup> from the sensible impression which we felt upon our bodies ; it has become in the mind a substance with quantity and quality ; it has been placed in space and subjected to time. Besides which it has been compared with other things and separated from them. In one word, it has become an idea, the archetype of a class, which is to include a number of objects, and to be the intellectual medium through which we view them. Thus, while each object in the external world exists by itself, and is distinct from any other ; in the mind, on the contrary, the whole universe is mapped out and classified. Nothing stands alone ; no individual object is viewed by itself, but is recognized by certain marks according to which it is referred to an idea within our minds.

The question then which occupied the schools, was, how far this classification was real ; that is, had anything really corresponding to it in nature. The mind has no immediate connection with the objects without us ; it forms its own judgment upon the impressions of sense according to its own rules. How far, the schoolmen asked, is this judgment objective, that is a true representation of the reality. Accuracy of thought was no characteristic of the times ; and so we find that the various theorists on the subject were not afraid of pushing their opinions as far as they would go. First came the bold Nominalist, who denied that the

<sup>2</sup> *Similitudo rei recipitur in intellectu secundum modum intellectus, et non secundum modum rei. Qu. 85. Art. 5. Ad. 3. Universalia secundum quod universalia non sunt nisi in anima. Opusculum de sensu respectu part. et intel. resp. univ.*

mind added anything whatever of its own to the impressions conveyed by the senses. He denied not only the validity but the existence of ideas, and affirmed that the words which express them were merely sounds uttered by the voice, raising in the mind by association the remembrance of a past sensation. With him there were no such things as qualities, and he professed himself utterly incapable of understanding what was meant by wisdom,<sup>3</sup> though he knew what was meant by a wise man; colour conveyed to him no idea, though he knew what was meant by a coloured horse. Opposed to him was the no less bold Realist, to whom the only reality was the idea, and that which corresponded to it out of the mind, one and the same immaterial essence running through a whole class, of which the forms assumed by the individual were but accidental varieties. To him the sensations conveyed no knowledge, and were but indications of the existence of what the mind knew before by an innate idea.

These two schools, the Realist and the Nominalist, agreed at least in their belief of the objective nature of our knowledge of the external world, though the former derived it entirely from the mind, the latter entirely from the perceptions of sense. But after them came a school who set up for the proper mean between both; these were the Conceptualists,<sup>4</sup> quick-witted dialecticians,

<sup>3</sup> Illi nostri temporis dialectici, qui non nisi flatum vocis putant esse universales substantias, cujus mens obscura est ad discernendum inter equum suum et colorem ejus—qui non queunt intelligere sapientiam hominis aliud quam animam. S. Anselm de fide trin. c. 2.

<sup>4</sup> The Conceptualists are nearly what are now called Nominalists. John of Salisbury classes Abelard with the Nominalists, though he said that his followers disliked the name. De nug. Cur. 7, 12, and Metalog. 2, 17.

men of clear but limited vision, well fitted to destroy, and but little capable of building up. In their system ideas were but logical abstractions, arbitrary creations of the mind, and conventional forms of thought. Being conventional they could only be true as conceptions; they were genera and species, and nothing more, and had no foundation in external nature. And thus they tried to solve the difficulty by accepting it. But at this point, with one fell swoop, came the Arabian Averrhoes upon the unwary schoolmen, telling them: "we accept your conclusion; the ideas of the mind are a subjective classification, having no foundation in external nature. They are the creation of the intellect.<sup>5</sup> How is it, however, that all men use one and the same classification? All have the same ideas of man; all know that an ox is, and a tree is not, an animal. The only way to account for this uniformity of such divisions of nature is the hypothesis that they are the creation not of many intellects, but of one." So Averrhoes boldly asserted that mankind had but one common intellect; and a large class of schoolmen took up the assertion with all its consequences. The ribald clerks<sup>6</sup> of the schools went

<sup>5</sup> Intellectus agens facit universale; quod est unum in multis. Sed illud quod est causa unitatis, magis est unum, ergo intellectus agens est unus in omnibus. *Summa Theol.* 1, Qu. 79, Art. 5. Averrhoism is generally referred to Realism, but Conceptualism ought to have a portion of the credit, for it had also a tendency to Pantheism. When the Nominalist argued *Species esse quæ non sunt obnoxie Creatori*, they paved the way for Avicenna, who said, *Quod prima substantia separata creata a Deo creat aliam post se, et substantiam orbis et animam ejus, et quod substantia orbis creat materiam inferiorum corporum.* 1 Qu. 45, 5. See John of Salisbury *de nug. Cur.* 2, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Goliardæ is the name given to these clerks in the life of St. Thomas published in the Bollandists. It has been supposed that this was a

about the country with the tonsure and ecclesiastical habit, teaching that after the dissolution of the body all distinction would be taken away, all souls would be merged into one, and consequently that all distinction of rewards and punishments would be impossible.

It was in the midst of this wild sea of opinion that St. Thomas found himself; the works of Averrhoes were the accredited comment on Aristotle, so that the Commentator was the name by which he was known, as Peter Lombard was the Master of the Sentences. To pull the Stagyrte down from his throne would have been impossible, if St. Thomas had wished it; all that could be done was to reconquer his works for the Church by giving them a Christian sense. He was obliged to throw his own philosophy into the terms which were in use about him. The same questions occupy men in every age, but each period has its own way of viewing them, and its own language, suited to its particular cast of thought. So St. Thomas threw himself manfully into the mazy labyrinth of words, and fought the new sceptical school with their own weapons. As if he had been the boldest Conceptualist, he laid it down as an axiom that the mind is the creator of its own objects.<sup>7</sup> By its own powers, it forms its ideas of external things, and yet its ideas are no false representations of the external world, for the matter of

mistake for Garlandia, a district of Paris. It appears, however, that Goliardæ was a name given to the seditious wandering scholars of the day. Dueange connects it with the modern French "Gaillard," and quotes the Councils of Treves 1227, and of Sens 1239. Rocquefort, Glossaire de la langue Romane, connects it with Goiart, an old Provençal word. The Council of Sens calls them familia Goliae.

<sup>7</sup> Voces non significant ipsas species intelligibiles, sed ea quæ intellectus sibi format ad judicandum de rebus exterioribus. Qu. 35. Art. 2. Ad. 3.

these ideas is furnished from without by the senses. And this is the reason why St. Thomas insisted that the proper objects of the intellect are derived from the senses,<sup>8</sup> because the very limitation of the powers of man is a guarantee that his ideas are not fictions, but have their foundation in that which is external to him, and over which he has no control. It is true that man has his own way of viewing the outward world, and the angels of God see it differently ; but there may be two methods of contemplating the same thing, yet neither need be false.<sup>9</sup> There is, therefore, no necessity to imagine an oneness of intellect such as Averrhoes held, in order to give an objective certainty to human knowledge. The intellect of man, that is of each individual man, has its own powers, far inferior indeed to those of the blessed angels, and yet it must not be despised, for it is an image of the Everlasting Wisdom, and its ideas are shadows of the archetypal ideas<sup>1</sup> of the Divine mind, according to which the world was created. Limited as are its powers, by looking on itself it can form a notion of God, which, though feeble and inadequate, is nevertheless capable of being developed by the Church on earth, in order to its perfect development in the Saints in heaven. The Arab had perverted into Pantheism a great and real truth. There is, indeed, one great Light which lighteneth every man

<sup>8</sup> Intellectus humani proprium objectum est quidditas sive natura in materia corporali existens, et per hujusmodi naturas visibilium rerum etiam in invisibilium rerum aliqualem cognitionem ascendit. Qu. 84. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Est enim absque falsitate ut alius sit modus intelligentis in intelligendo quam modus rei in essendo. Qu. 85, art. 1, ad. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Necesse est dicere quod anima humana omnia cognoscat in rationibus æternis per quarum participationem cognoscimus — non tamen objective sed causaliter. Qu. 84, 5.

which cometh into the world ;<sup>2</sup> but this does not interfere with the fact that the intellect of each man is a substantive thing, with its own powers and operations, just as the fact that each human being derives his existence from God does not take away from his individual personality, nor blend his being with that of his Creator.

It is evident from this, that the mode in which St. Thomas defends the Church from peril, is very different from that in which St. Bernard had fought her cause in the century before. St. Thomas is engaged in vindicating the human intellect, while St. Bernard's works tended, at least, to depreciate the exercise of it. The reason is, that the aspect of things was changed since the Church was saved from the influx of rationalism by hindering the progress of the scholastic movement. Men no longer identified faith with reason, as Abelard had done ; they had now learnt quite sufficiently to separate them. For instance, Averrhoes had removed the intellect utterly out of the control of the conscience, and had introduced fatalism into the exercise of reason. The view taken by his disciples was, that faith and reason were utterly and irrevocably opposed. Men said that the doctrines of faith and the conclusions of reason were the direct contradictory to each other ; no one, however, was bound to choose between them ; both might exist together in the mind, without the necessity of coming to any conclusion.<sup>3</sup> In other words, they believed nothing what-

<sup>2</sup> *Intellectus separatus secundum nostræ fidei documenta est ipse Deus, qui est Creator animæ, unde ab ipso anima humana lumen intellectuâle participat. Qu. 79, art. 4.*

<sup>3</sup> The Averrhoists said, "Per rationem concludo de necessitate, quod intellectus est unus numero ; firmiter tamen teneo oppositum per fidem." St. Thomas de Unitate Intellectus.

ever ; truth was, with them, a mere matter of words and of system. The categories were their creed, and they put their faith in the abstractions of their own mind.

In this state of things, when men had lost the first principles of their faith, it was useless to appeal to their religiousness, as St. Bernard had done. St. Thomas set himself to place faith and reason in right relation to each other. The intellect, he said, was a sacred gift of God, and could never really be contrary to the truth.<sup>4</sup> In its own sphere it was perfect, but the field of faith was a vast system lying beyond the sphere of intellect. And this system was out of the jurisdiction of reason, so that it could pronounce nothing on the matter. If an unbeliever, therefore, attacked the faith, reason was of use in answering his objections, but it could do no more. If he persisted in unbelief, nothing could be done with him, for the believer and the infidel could then have no common ground to argue upon. But though the intellect is powerless as an organ for the discovery of the faith, yet it may serve as the expression of the doctrines conveyed by revelation. Faith no more excludes reason, than grace does nature;<sup>5</sup> and divine truths, when received into the human mind, must take the shape of human ideas and of human words.

<sup>4</sup> *Quamvis veritas fidei Christianæ humanæ rationis capacitatem excedat, hæc tamen quæ ratio naturaliter indita habet huic veritati contraria esse non possent. Contra Gen. 1, 7.*

<sup>5</sup> *Sacra doctrina disputat contra negantem sua principia argumentando quidem si adversarius aliquid concedat eorum quæ per divinam revelationem habentur. Si vero adversarius nihil credat eorum quæ divinitus revelantur non remanet amplius via ad probandum articulos fidei per rationes.—Utitur sacra doctrina ratione humana non ad probandam fidem sed ad manifestandum aliqua alia quæ traduntur in hac doctrina. Cum enim gratia non tollat naturam sed perficiat, oportet quod naturalis ratio subserviat fidei. Qu. 1, art. 8.*



Thus St. Thomas conceived that the great truths of revelation might be expressed in terms of reason, that the faith might be systematized and presented as one vast whole, consisting of parts in harmony with each other. Theology is man's knowledge of God as He graciously reveals Himself, and, though it is divine in its origin, it may be treated as human, and be presented as a science, of which the different parts appear as deductions one from another, though they were not so conveyed to the mind. In order to effect this, he took the terms of Aristotle's philosophy, partly because it was then taught in the schools, partly because it was true, in the sense in which the subject matter is capable of truth, that is, it is a scientific arrangement of facts and a successful classification of the ideas of the human mind.

This, then, was the work which St. Thomas did for the Church, and the way in which he restored health to the schools of the thirteenth century. Any system is powerful, from the fact that it is a system. It has an air of reality, like a fortified place with continuous walls and bastions. And so even the absurdities of Averrhoes were believed, because they were clothed in scientific language. But when, in the *Summa* of St. Thomas, Christianity had appeared in all its awful oneness, the unreality of its pantheistic antagonist was visible at once.

The thirteenth century, then, after all these dangers and perplexities, closed with a signal triumph for Christianity; but it was not won without much pain and weariness. And in this imperfect sketch of the great struggle which was going on in Christendom, many a weary combat which was taking place in

various parts of it has been left out. Hardly anything has been said of England, and, now that we have taken a view of the whole state of things on the Continent, we will proceed to show the part which England's Saints had in the mighty contest.

LIFE OF

**St. Richard of Chichester.**

---

CHAPTER I.

RICHARD IN THE SCHOOLS.

AMONG the Saints of God are to be found men and women of every class and mode of life, soldiers and monks, kings and hermits, mothers of families and holy virgins. In that vast assembly are practical men as well as contemplative men. And the reason of this is that the character of Saints vary with the wants of the Church in every age. It has been observed that about the middle of the twelfth century, the leading churchmen of the day were generally men of business and legists. This became more marked as the state of things, commonly called the middle ages, became more systematized; and in the beginning of the thirteenth century, it is plain that the great men of the Church, the cardinals and bishops, were mostly chosen out of this class. Among these also God has His Saints; while the Cistercian movement spiritualized the Church by drawing men away from the world, and setting them up as lights upon a hill, the next century produced men who conquered the world while they remained in it.

Of this class is the Saint whose life we are now to write.

In the little town of Wyche, on the banks of the quiet stream of the Salwarp, and near the borders of Fakenham forest, dwelt two orphans, the sons of Richard and Alicia de Wyche.<sup>1</sup> Their parents had died when they were young, and had left them heirs to the lands of Burford, in the neighbourhood. These boys and at least one sister were left under guardians who probably neglected their property, for when the eldest came of age he found that every thing had gone to ruin. He might have sunk down in despair had it not been for his younger brother. Richard, for such was his name, had, up to this time, been remarkable for a grave and serious character altogether above his years. He was a great bookworm, and when other children were at play he would be sitting down quietly at his studies. None as yet guessed how much energy there was in the boy; his brother, however, who came closer to him and saw that Richard was a child of unusual and spotless purity, loved and looked up to him, notwithstanding the apparent apathy of his character. And now that he entered on his waste and uncultivated lands, he naturally turned to his younger brother for advice and support. Richard bade him trust in God, who is the Father of the fatherless, and not only gave him words of comfort, but took the whole management of his brother's affairs into his

<sup>1</sup> In Dallaway's *Sussex*, St. Richard's name is said to have been Chandos, because his brother is so called in his will. This, however, is very uncertain, for his brother is called Richard Bachdene in Bocking's life. Bocking also mentions a relation of the Saint, called Nicholas de Wyche. The *History of Worcestershire* calls him Burford, from the lands of that name held by his family, which are said still to exist. His sister is mentioned by him in his will. St. Richard was probably born in the year 1197.

hands. He had as yet shown no taste for farming, but he applied his mind vigorously to it, and soon possessed himself of all the mysteries of agriculture. He set to work, and drained marshy pools and cleared away tangled weeds and thick brushwood, till all men acknowledged that the quiet student was a very practical farmer. The township of Wyche was celebrated for its plentiful salt-springs, and the lands around were covered with extensive plantations to supply fuel for the saltworks. A part of Richard's occupation was therefore, probably, the cutting down and carting wood to keep up the fires in the pans. But whatever his work was, he did it effectually and thoroughly.

All men praised him, and his brother regarded him with reverence as a superior being ; but none of them knew the extent of the sacrifice which he was making. While he was handling the hoe or the axe in the field, his thoughts were very far from Wyche ; from his childhood he had longed for knowledge, and he had desired to go to some of the universities, the fame and the importance of which were daily increasing. It was, therefore, a great self-denial to him, when he tied himself down to all the dry details of husbandry from affection to his brother. But while he was at this work, his character deepened with the anxieties and the business of life, and what was at first a thirst for knowledge became an earnest desire to devote himself to the glory of God. Our Lord rewarded him for his dutifulness to his elder brother by giving him a desire for Christian perfection. The Gospel, while it proclaims a reward to those who give up the endearments of home, has certainly not depreciated, but highly exalted, the ties of natural affection ; and, if we knew more of the souls of men, we might find that those Saints who have quitted their homes

for the service of God, are precisely those whom God has rewarded by greater measures of His grace for their self-denying love in the bosom of their families. At least it was so in Richard's case ; while his brother's fields were blooming beneath his care, he was secretly determining to leave all and to give himself up to a life of privation and of celibacy for Christ's sake.

He kept this resolution a profound secret, and it was only known at the time when he was forced to make a final choice between the world and Christ. So grateful was his brother for Richard's care, that he suddenly proposed to him to put the whole of the estates into his hands. At the same time, a noble and beautiful lady was offered to him in marriage. These two offers coming at the same time, at once determined him, and he told his brother that now the estates no longer needed his superintendence, and he would execute his long-cherished scheme of quitting all he loved on earth to prepare himself for the priesthood. " So," says an old writer, " he left his friends, his estates, and the maiden who might have been his bride, and went to Oxford."

It may seem to have required but little self-denial to plant himself for a few years in a pleasant seat of learning. But middle-age Oxford is by no means the classic alma mater of modern time. Not one of its many colleges was then standing ; only one of the many spires which now shoot up amongst its elms and chesnut-trees was then in existence. If a man had placed himself in those days on one of the hills which overhang Oxford, and had looked down through an opening in the thick woods of the royal chace of Bagley, he would have seen, between that and the opposite forest-crowned hill of Shotover, a wide plain, intersected by the broad stream of the Isis. In one part cut up into numerous islands by the branches of

the river, and by the channel of its tributary, the Cherwell, he would see the walls and fortifications of Oxford; on the side nearest him arose the dark Saxon mass of St. Frideswide's Abbey, with its high spire, and near it the quadrangle of Oseney Abbey, occupying one of the islands; not far off was another islet in St. Ebbe's parish, soon to be covered by the Dominican schools, while over all frowned the stout keep of St. George's castle. But if the warlike aspect of the city of Oxford, with the wild forest of Shotover and the mazy channels and deep pools of the river, where now are broad streets, mark off old Oxford from new, much more does the uproarious clerk of ancient times differ from our peaceful students. When the alarum of St. Martin's announced that the townsfolk were stirring, and the bell of St. Mary called the students to arms, then the scholar threw away his books and snatched up his cross-bow. The combat which ensued was not a riot, but a battle in the streets; while the gates of the city were guarded to prevent the men from the county from entering to help the town. Such was the hatred between the parties, that murders were at times committed from holiday wantonness; and a student passing on a May-day evening near Carfax, stood a chance of loss of life from the rough handling of the townsmen. And then, amidst the many thousand students crowded into this narrow space, were many ribald clerks, as they were called, who lived in Oxford to indulge their idle and dissolute habits. There were riots not only with the town, but between the strong and hardy Northern students and their more refined Southern fellows. Besides which, there was not a party in the realm which had not its representatives at Oxford; and, according to an old proverb, the noise of a riot there, was the precursor of a gathering storm from one end of England to

the other. King and pope were alike rudely treated in this seditious little world. In the war of the barons, the university was against the king; but especially was Oxford the representative of the Anglican dislike of ultramontanes,<sup>9</sup> which was then breaking out. Although it had nothing to do with doctrine, and was only a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, yet it was a spark which was easily kindled to a flame. Witness the cardinal legate, who was saluted with cries of "Where is the usurer, the simoniacal thief!" and who escaped in disguise, and never drew bridle till he reached Abingdon." To finish the picture, the uproar of riotous banquets might be heard in the streets when some student passed his responsions;<sup>1</sup> and often might be met the noisy band of students, with banners, masks, and garlands, celebrating the feast-day of some favourite Saint.

It was in this uproarious town that Richard now took up his abode; and it is refreshing to dwell upon him and to think of him as the representative of many a peaceful, religious clerk, in this vast assemblage of many nations. When first he went to Oxford, he might have appeared among his fellow-students as a man in easy circumstances. Our Lord, however, in order to crown him with that beatitude pronounced over the poor, suffered him to be deprived of his property. He had entrusted it to the care of a priest, who was faithless to his trust, and wasted what he possessed. Richard, however, contentedly took his place among the poor ones of the earth. If he ever felt resentment against the man who had injured him, it soon disappeared, for in after times he relieved the wants of this faithless priest. It must have

<sup>9</sup> See the use of *transmontanus* and *transalpinus* in Matthew of Paris, in ann. 1229, p. 362, and 1238, p. 469.

<sup>1</sup> Bukeus, vol. 3, 82.



been a sore trial to his patience, for henceforth he lived on the pittance which he could derive from his friends, and the lot of a poor scholar at Oxford was a very hard one. There were some noble and rich men among them ; but by far the greater part lived on exhibitions,<sup>2</sup> or on the small pittance which they derived from their homes. As there were no colleges, they lived in scattered lodging-houses up and down the town. Some of these belonged to the religious houses in or near Oxford, but most of them were the property of the burghers ; and the high price which they exacted for them was one of the many causes of heart-burning between the Town and Gown.<sup>3</sup> And wretched enough they were at the time of which we are writing, many of them being merely thatched or wooden houses.<sup>4</sup> In the better sort of these a master, with a great many scholars, lived together, and the community was called a Hall ; but it was in one of the poorest of them that Richard lived, with two other clerks as badly off as himself. They had but one gown<sup>5</sup> between them, so that when one of them had gone out to lecture, the other two sat at home in an under-garment, and could not go out till he returned. Their fare was of the coarsest kind ; bread and a little wine and soup, formed their scanty meal ; on highdays and holidays only had they either fish or meat. They were up in the morning before day-break at their books ; and when the great bell of St. Mary's rung, they must away to the schools to

<sup>2</sup> Wood in ann. 1246.

<sup>3</sup> Wood in ann. 1214, 1216, 1235.

<sup>4</sup> It appears from Wood's Annals in ann. 1190, that many houses were built of stone in consequence of a fire ; but, from a notice on the year 1235, that most of the houses in the city were still generally thatched.

<sup>5</sup> Cappa.

lecture ; at mid-day were the disputations ; in the evening they repeated to their master the morning lecture. And then, when all was over, they lay down each on his hard pallet to take the student's hasty sleep. Truly the fruits of the tree of knowledge have ever been bitter to mankind ; the labour of thought wears away the body and soul of the student. And if dimness of eye and paleness of cheek are the marks of the ambitious scholar in the comfortable rooms of an Oxford college, what must have been the sinking of heart with which the poor middle-age student returned in a winter's night to his cold chamber, and laid his tired head on his hard pillow ! Yet Richard afterwards used to look back with a sorrowing pleasure to this peaceful time, and to say that it was the happiest part of his life. There is of course something joyful, notwithstanding the labour of study, in the expansion of the faculties, in the perception of truth coming on the soul, not in the shape of a conclusion, but like a flash of light in a dark place. All this is, of course, a source of pleasure, but it is not enough to keep up a uniform cheerfulness. The details of science are dry and tasteless, and the mind soon flags, for discoveries do not break upon it every day, and excitement cools. Richard, however, was never weary ; his spirits did not flag even amidst the privations and in all the humiliations which poverty brings with it. "Never would he, either by himself or his friends," says Bocking,<sup>6</sup> "petition for a benefice. And when his companions, or any others about him, talked about obtaining revenues and benefices, he used to tell them, 'Let us take no care for such matters ; if we serve God faithfully, He will sufficiently provide for us. He whom we serve

<sup>6</sup> c. 5. ap. Boll. p. 297.

will reward us more than we deserve.' Even with that small pittance that was allowed him, he was always cheerful and happy, and cared so little about worldly things, that he let others manage even the small means which he possessed." He rejoiced in his poverty, because it reduced him to the condition of his Lord upon earth.

It is not known precisely to what master Richard applied for instruction. At that time, when the university system was so unformed, the students chose what master they would. When once a man had obtained his master's degree, he opened a school, and his success depended entirely on his popularity. Bachelors always endeavoured to obtain a large assembly of scholars to accompany them to their public exercises for their master's degree, and the promise of a dinner soon collected together a number of worthless and hungry students; but, unless the master was a man of merit, his honorary scholars soon quitted him, and his schools were often empty. Indeed so great was the license, that many so-called students never went to any master at all, till at length a law was made<sup>7</sup> to force every scholar to put himself under a master within fifteen days after his arrival in Oxford, otherwise he should not be considered as a member of the university, nor be entitled to the privilege of exemption from secular authority, which was extended to all clerks, and which was the bait which attracted these varlets, as they are called, to Oxford. The schools were all private property, or else they belonged to various orders or religious houses, who either used them for the disputations of their own members, or let them out to others. Even the little nunnery of St. Mary Littlemore, which lay

<sup>7</sup> Wood in ann. 1231.

almost hidden in the fields near Oxford, derived a revenue from its schools ; though, of course, the good abess and the sisters had little enough to do with logic, or the decretals. At the time when Richard went to Oxford, a master was in repute there who had a great influence over his future life, and it is probable that he frequented his schools during his undergraduate life ; this was the famous Grosseteste,<sup>8</sup> afterwards bishop of Lincoln.

The time when Richard first came to Oxford was a critical period, for the scholastic method was beginning to gain ground there. It is curious to see how slowly the continental movement in philosophy crossed the channel. While Paris was convulsed by Abelard, Oxford was looking on in silence. Robert Pullen,<sup>9</sup> its great doctor at that time, wrote a compendium of theology, which, from the favour with which St. Bernard looked upon its author, evidently did not belong to the new school of teaching. One indication of a similar movement exists in the publication of a book, treating on the Holy Trinity in the scholastic method, in the first year of the 13th century, but it seems to have scandalised the Oxford schools. Again, Grosseteste was distinguished rather for his practical knowledge than for the speculative tendencies of his teaching.<sup>1</sup> He was fond of Greek learning, and his skill in

<sup>8</sup> The time of Grosseteste's mastership in Oxford seems to have been about 1220, for it was then that the Franciscan schools were set up, in which he lectured, according to the *Annals of Lanercost*, ap. *Ang. Sac.*

<sup>9</sup> Not enough has been thought of this Robert, who was the first English cardinal. Cave says that he restored Oxford, which was ruined by scholastic theology ; but every other author attributes its decay to the troubled state of England, which is much more likely. *v. St. Bernard*, Ep. 205, 362.

<sup>1</sup> Grosseteste is said to have commented on Aristotle's posterior analytics. It is not however the mere lecturing on Aristotle, but the

physical science won him the reputation of a magician. Some years after he showed the bent of his mind by warning the university not to quit the ways of their ancestors for novel methods, and to teach theology by comments on the holy scriptures.<sup>2</sup> It was long before the practical and conservative mind of England got over its dread of the new philosophy. Besides which, it soon received a check from the arrival of certain strangers, who always exercised a material influence over the schools. In 1222, the Black Friars were first seen in Oxford,<sup>3</sup> and about the same time came their brethren the Grey Friars; and what was the primary effect of their coming may be seen from a story told of the first Franciscans, who set up a school on the banks of the Isis. It is said, that after they had been set up some years, brother Agnellus of Pisa, the Franciscan superior, came to visit them. The scholars got up a special disputation to honour their visitor, and the question proposed was on the existence of God. The Grey brother listened for some time, but at length he started up, and broke abruptly on the disputants. "Alas! fathers all, ignorant men are up," he said,

application of his philosophy to theology, which characterised the new school of teaching. v. Huber. vol. 1. p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> That Grosseteste refers to scholasticism is not evident till it is known that the name by which the followers of the old method were called was *Biblici*, while the schoolmen were called *Sententiatos*. The method of the old teachers was to comment on the Bible, and to prove all that they asserted by the authority of the Fathers. The schoolmen commented on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, and brought out the truth by disputation. The Book of the Sentences itself was the link between the two systems, as it consisted of a number of quotations from the Fathers, drawn up systematically. Bulaeus, vol. 3, 657.

<sup>3</sup> Nic. Trivetius in ann. 1222, ap. d'Achery, *Spicil. Wading Annals*, vol. I, 364.

“taking heaven by force ; and men who had never learnt letters, love with the strictest bonds of charity the God in whom they firmly believe ; meanwhile, the masters of this our school, brethren who have vowed poverty, who every day feel the eye of God’s providence upon them, are wrangling whether there be a God !” And so he ordered them to send for the books of the decretals, and henceforth to quit metaphysics and to take to canon law. And this action of the friar is the more significant, because canon law was precisely the refuge of the men who were frightened at the progress of the new philosophy. There was something definite and tangible in the distinct decrees of the canons, which suited the minds of practical men ; and though the jealousy of English kings drove away its first professor, and though churchmen at times exclaimed against the detriment done to theology, yet the decretals kept their ground, and progressed so much that Law became a separate faculty. Nay, it was the cause that dogmatic theology became a faculty by itself ; for, when one branch of theology was separated from arts, the other naturally followed.<sup>4</sup> Now, which side did Richard take in this struggle between the old and new theology ? Though but few records are left of this part of his life, the course which his studies took indicates plainly enough the bent of his mind, for he finished by going to Bologna to study canon law. The facts recorded of this part of his life before he went to Italy,<sup>5</sup> comprising as it does six or seven years’ of painful

<sup>4</sup> Huber. vol. I. p. 369.

<sup>5</sup> There are so few data for the chronology of St. Richard’s life, that it is impossible to get beyond conjecture. He must have studied six years before he took his master’s degree, as appears from Bularius, 3, 81. After that he was bound to lecture two years more. Besides this, he remained for seven years at Bologna. If he came back to

struggles with poverty, are very few and scanty. It is only known that after some time spent at Oxford, as did most students who wished to perfect themselves, he went to Paris. There he took his bachelor's degree, but what master he assisted in his lectures cannot now be ascertained. He became a master at Paris, and then returned to Oxford, where he opened a school. Of this short sojourn in England, the only record which remains is an account of the manner in which God preserved his servant from imminent danger. He was one day at a feast given by a young master who had just taken his degree, when one of the servants came to say, that a man was without, wishing to speak to master Richard. His host went out and found a beautiful youth on horseback at the door, whom he courteously invited in, saying that he might speak to Richard at the banquet. The youth however refused, and said that the master must at once come out to him. Richard rose, and to his surprise, when he reached the door, saw no one whatever in the street ; the youth had gone away. On returning to the feast he found all the guests in consternation, for in his absence a stone had fallen from the ceiling on the spot where he had been sitting. Richard's spotless life was already well known in Oxford, and it was always thought that God had sent his angel to deliver his servant.

For seven long years did Richard remain at Bologna ; where he had constantly before him the blue outline of the Apennines instead of the woody tops of the low hills which bound the horizon of Oxford. This seems a long period, and it appears a long way for an Englishman to go to learn law. But it was a part of the magnificent policy of the

Oxford about 1235 (as is likely from his being chancellor about that time), he probably first entered the university about 1220.

Popes to bind all Christendom together by one ecclesiastical code, or rather it was the natural result of that state of things in which Rome was the fountain of justice and the great court of appeal for the Church. The tendency to reduce to system what had before been floating custom, which had begun, as has been observed, in the middle of the last century, had gone on with all its advantages and all its inconveniences. Eugenius III. had ordered the decretals to be read at Bologna; Innocent III. himself was the greatest canonist of his time, and Peter of Benevento collected together his decrees by his order. About the very time that Richard was on the point of quitting Italy, Gregory IX. employed St. Raymond of Pennafort<sup>6</sup> to draw up the decretals, and to complete Gratian's imperfect books. It was the policy of the Popes to encourage the canon law; for by the side of the law of the Church, partly its rival, partly its model, was rising up the formidable *jus Cæsareum*, the civil law of the empire.<sup>7</sup> Bologna was thus a most important place, for both popes and emperors sent their laws and decretals thither<sup>8</sup> as it were to register them, that they might there be taught to the crowds of students who flocked thither from all parts of Europe. Frederic II. found that Bologna was too much in the hands of the Church for his purpose, and endeavoured to transfer the university to Naples, but he utterly failed.

Richard therefore found himself in a most important part of the Christian world, when he was at Bologna. It numbered ten thousand students in its university, and the most celebrated professors were there. It was

<sup>6</sup> According to Tiraboschi, vol. 4, 304, in 1234.

<sup>7</sup> The decretals were drawn up in five books to imitate the Pandects. Tiraboschi, vol. 4, 301.

<sup>8</sup> Tiraboschi, 4, 55.



by no means, however, a peaceful place at the time when Richard was at his studies. Bologna was the life and soul of the league against the emperor. The war-chariot of the Bolognese was often out, and its bravest drawn up about it, in its wars with its Ghibelline neighbour, Modena. Frederic was preparing a war with Italy, and the Bolognese were arming themselves to meet him, and new-modelling their militia.<sup>9</sup> While Richard was there also, he had an opportunity of watching the power of the new Order of Dominican friars. John of Vicenza was there, the representative of peace amongst the deadly feuds of Italy. Bologna was his head-quarters, and its citizens followed him with the cross and with banners on his mission of peace. He went about reconciling enemies to each other, and at length on the banks of the Adige he preached to an innumerable multitude, on a stated day; and such was his eloquence that Guelph and Ghibelline threw themselves into each other's arms, and a peace was concluded by the rival cities throughout Lombardy. Alas! it did not last long, and before Richard had left Italy, blood had been shed again. Still, throughout the whole of the contest the law studies went on, and Richard could go on reading the Pandects with the din of arms about his ears. Law had become too necessary to be interrupted. If any one had a cause at Rome, he must have lawyers to plead it. A Bolognese lawyer was not long before employed against a king of England. A knowledge of canon law was the way to wealth and honour. The stately maxims of ecclesiastical law suited well the calm and serious mind of Richard. It was no dry study, for canon law was the embodying of the practical principles of Christianity, and showed at one

<sup>9</sup> Dulcinus, b. 5, ap. Burmanni thesaur. tom. 12.

view the whole of the working and organization of the Holy Catholic Church. Richard made such progress that his master, who was old and infirm, entrusted to him the instruction of his pupils. Besides this, he won the heart of the old man, who offered to give him his daughter in marriage, and to make him his heir. Richard might have been pardoned, if he hesitated, for it seemed ungrateful to reject his master's kindness ; but he remembered that his vocation was to be a priest, and he fled from the temptation, and quitted Bologna.

He returned to England about the year 1135, and on his reappearance at Oxford was received with open arms, as befitted a doctor in canon law ; and shortly afterwards he was called upon to fill the office of chancellor of the university. His functions were most important ; first he had the power of granting degrees. In doing this, he was of course necessarily dependent on the report of the masters, as to the persons on whom he conferred them. With the bachelors he probably had little to do, for the baccalaureat was hardly as yet a degree. A bachelor was little more than a probationer, who was teaching in the school of a master in order to be approved for the higher degree. On approval, he was presented to the chancellor by the master under whom he served. Still the university had not so far grown into a system as to supersede the chancellor's personal inquiry into the candidate's qualifications ; and, as few scholars actually proceeded to the degree, the number would not be too large to render it impossible. Besides which, there were as yet no colleges to be answerable to the chancellor for the character of the scholar, so that his function in this respect was the highest in Oxford. Secondly, the chancellor was the judge of the university. He punished all riotous scholars, and the king now and

then would lend him his prison to confine the delinquents. His police was at this time very imperfect, so that a great deal more depended on his personal character than on the physical force of the university.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, he was the great law adviser of the university; all contracts passed through his hands, and he kept the seal of the university, so that the whole of the business of Oxford, as it may be called, required his presence. In early times, when rights are undefined and there are few precedents, deeds well signed and sealed, though but bits of parchment, are very important things. Witness the trembling of the monks when a king bade them send in their charters for confirmation; it was a sure way of extracting money from them.<sup>2</sup> Hence the growing importance of the officer who could write out such deeds, and still more of him who kept the seal, which put the finishing stroke to the transaction. In this capacity the chancellor was often brought in contact with the town, as the chief legal authority of the university.

The multiplicity of Richard's functions was such that his place was no sinecure. And the labour of it was increased from the fact that as Oxford was not an episcopal city, he was much more independent than the functionaries who corresponded to him at Paris. His functions were there divided between the chancellor of the bishop and the chancellor of the abbey of St. Genevieve, officers not appointed by the university, and often opposed to it. But in Oxford the masters had so much to do with the appointment of their chancellor that Richard is said to have been elected by them.<sup>3</sup> His office had not grown out of the chancellor of the diocese; and though

<sup>1</sup> v. Wood's *Fasti* in ann. 1231.

<sup>2</sup> *Matt. Par.* in ann. 1227.

<sup>3</sup> *Chronicle of Wikes* in ann. 1288.

he was confirmed by the bishop of Lincoln, the masters had the right of electing him.

The precise time<sup>4</sup> when Richard left Oxford is not known, but he was soon called away to a higher sphere. Two prelates at the same time had thoughts of making him their chancellor. His old master, Robert Grosseteste, was now bishop of Lincoln, and therefore diocesan of Oxford. To him had belonged the confirmation of his election to the chancellorship of the university, and he kept his eye on Richard, and when the chancellorship of his diocese fell vacant determined to give him the appointment. Before he could do so, however, St. Edmund, the Archbishop of Canterbury, had already made him his chancellor. How many things in this life are decided by little differences of time and place ! It looks like a lucky chance that the archbishop should have forestalled the bishop in Richard's appointment, and yet it exercised an influence on him for all eternity. If he had been thrown in contact with the courageous but rough-spoken Grosseteste, his character would have been cast in a different mould from that which it received from the saintly and no less courageous Edmund.

<sup>4</sup> It appears from Wood, that the chancellors for the years 1235-6-7 are not known ; it was, therefore, during one of these that St. Richard exercised the office. That it was not in 1242 is evident, for he must have been St. Edmund's chancellor long before that.

## CHAPTER II.

## RICHARD IN EXILE.

RICHARD's new office, though it made him an ecclesiastic, did not involve more than some of the minor Orders. It is easy to describe Richard's employment in a few words. Strangely enough he had reversed the order of things, and had now taken the office out of which his former employment of chancellor at Oxford had grown. The chancellor of the diocese issued licenses for teaching, and appointed the master of the cathedral school; and from this function it was that the university chancellors derived the right of granting degrees; and though, as Oxford was not a cathedral town, that officer was not identical with the diocesan chancellor, still it was by a sort of analogy that the bishop's functions of appointing teachers to the schools of the diocese were vested in him. Besides his power of granting licenses, Richard in his new capacity had the care of the cathedral library. His highest functions<sup>1</sup> were, however, that of keeper of the episcopal seal, and of judge of the ecclesiastical court. Originally a chancellor had been a mere notary, but it is easy to see how,

<sup>1</sup> St. Richard seems to have been more than the chancellor of the chapter described in the Lichfield statutes. He is called *Cancellarius curiæ*, Chancellor of the Archbishop's Court.

when business multiplied, the officer who drew out the instruments by which the bishop's pleasure was made known or his license granted, would become in effect the dispenser of his powers. As the bishop's powers are laid down by certain determinate forms and are administered through law, the chancellor must be a learned canonist and civilian. In this way all things relating to wills and contracts come before him judicially. All letters demissory; resignations of benefices; oaths tendered to new incumbents; licenses to preach and hear confessions; all special powers granted to nunneries; in a word, all that related to episcopal jurisdiction passed through his hands.<sup>2</sup> Another office, which belonged rather to secular chancellors, but which probably came into Richard's functions, was to assist in legislation as well as in the administration of the law.<sup>3</sup> The chancellor of the empire, for instance, took care that the emperor's constitutions and rescripts were consistent with themselves and with the principles of law; and, doubtless, Richard assisted St. Edmund in framing the constitutions which are called after his name. In fact, like all other chancellors, he was to be the principal authority in all legal matters, and to assist his superior's decisions by his learning.

This is but a summary description of Richard's multifarious duties; but it would be possible to dwell

<sup>2</sup> Vide Fifth Council of Milan, 14, 15, which, though of no authority for the times here described, gives a good notion of the duties of an ecclesiastical chancellor.

<sup>3</sup> Bulaeus's description of a chancellor is an officer *cujus cæ sunt primæ partes videre ut nulla Principis constitutio, nulla sanctio, &c. non e republica atque etiam e dignitate reipublicæ, principalique exeant.* Vide Van Espen, part i. tit. 23. *Hic est qui leges cancellat iniquas et mandata pii principis æqua facit,* says John of Salisbury.

longer upon them without giving a just idea of this part of his life. They were but the external part of it, for he became not only the chancellor, but the intimate friend of St. Edmund. His life is, at this time, merged in that of the Saint; and nothing is told of him but that he stood by the illustrious sufferer to the last. It seems almost a rule of God's Providence, that Saints should be sent out in pairs to support each other in this bad world, as the disciples were sent out two and two at the first. James and John, Peter and Andrew, Martha and Mary, appear together; and when the ties of earthly relationship are suspended, and brothers are to meet no more on this side the grave, then often their place is supplied in another way, as Peter had Mark, and Paul had Luke for a companion. But this is especially the case in those Saints whose work lies in the world; and never did any want help more than St. Edmund. Alas! for the gentle theologian when he was set up on high on the archiepiscopal seat of Canterbury. It was nothing to have bold barons, rough, iron-clad men to contend with; but when there were sharp-witted canonists meeting him at every turn, and as often as he talked in eloquent words of the liberties and the wrongs of the Church of Christ, blocking him up with a canon or a scrap from the Pandects, he much wanted Richard at his elbow to parry the lawyer's thrusts with the same bright sharp weapons. And when St. Edmund crossed the Alps, and lo! there were his quick opponents, not running straightforward, but doubling and turning to get the better of him at the court of Rome; right glad was he of a letter from his faithful chancellor at home, to cheer him up and to let him know that he had a friend at Canterbury to look after his interests in his absence. After all,

in such a contest, Richard's friendship was even more valuable than his legal knowledge. It was not the bestial hyena-like rage of William Rufus, nor was it the fury of Henry, crafty and cruel as the spotted panther, that he had to oppose ; these would have been noble opponents compared to the weak-minded, vacillating Henry. And then, above all, there was the miserable expectation of hope deferred ; the waiting in vain for the tardy decisions from Rome ; the coldness of the legate ; and the faint-heartedness of men high in authority. Other men had their work appointed them in the midst of terrible storms ; but St. Edmund had to toil on, like a traveller who faces the keen and cutting east wind, or the inexorable down-pouring dropping of November's rain. In all this Richard was by his side, clasping his hand tight and cheering him on in this dull, black winter. "In all things," says Ralph Bocking, "Richard had an eye to the peace and quiet of his lord and archbishop, who he knew had chosen out and loved the good part of Mary. The archbishop inwardly rejoiced that by the discreet fondness and fond discretion of his chancellor, he was saved from the tumult of outward business ; the chancellor was glad to be taught by the holiness and heavenly conversation of his lord. Each leaned upon the other, the holy on the holy ; master on disciple ; disciple on master ; father on son ; son on father. To one who looked on them religiously, they seemed like the two cherubims of glory, stretching over the ark of the Lord, that is, the Church of Canterbury, each with his holy eye gazing intently on the other, touching each other with wings of mutual love ; their faces, that is, their wills, ever turned to the Seat of propitiation, to Him who is the propitiation for our sins."



And when the struggle was over, and the Saint, wearied out with care and anxiety, took refuge in Pontigny, Richard followed him faithfully. At last the blessed Edmund died, and Richard turned away from Pontigny with a feeling of desolation and a sinking of the heart. "Orphan of such a father," says his historian, "he would perchance have transgressed the bounds of religious grief, if he had not feared to murmur against the Providence of God, and if he had not believed that his venerable father had exchanged this wretched life for an immortal state of happiness." The death of his friend had left a sad blank in his existence; for his whole life had been wrapped up in him for many years. His eye had ever been fixed on him to anticipate his least wishes before he uttered them, and his ears had ever been open to catch every word that fell from his lips. There was even a melancholy pleasure in smoothing his pillow in his sickness; but now that he was gone, there seemed to be nothing left for him to do upon earth.

He was, however, mistaken; there were still many years of a weary pilgrimage to go through before he was called away. By degrees the violence of his grief wore off, but it became a deep-seated principle in his soul. There are some sorrows which alter and transfuse the whole man, as a furnace changes the substances which pass through it. Henceforth his life was one long remembrance of St. Edmund. Resignation came to him in the memory of those words, among the last that the Saint had uttered, "Thy will be done." He thought of the Saint's affection for him, and of that clause in his will by which it appeared that Richard was in his last earthly thoughts, "We leave our cup to our beloved chancellor, whom we have long held in our heart." And then he thought that one who had been privileged to

come so close to a great Saint had an account to render for his use of the talent. He set himself therefore to imitate the model which had thus come before him. When he recollected the angelic contemplation of the Saint and his intense devotion in the midst of his wearing cares, he bethought himself that there was something better to be learned than canon and civil law, so he betook himself to a Dominican convent at Orleans to study theology.

He here found himself in an atmosphere very different from that in which he had lived at Oxford or Bologna. It was different even from that of Pontigny. Farming in all its branches was the order of the day among the Cistercians; and if they quitted the abbey-gates, it was on horseback, on their way to some grange belonging to the monastery; there were granaries and stables in plenty, for the monks lived on the produce of their farms. But among the Black Friars, those who issued from the house, went forth on foot to preach in the open air at the foot of a cross in some lonely, out-lying parish, or else in the cathedral of some town which contained a university. Some even might be seen taking their departure for distant lands to preach the gospel to the Saracen or the Tartar. The brethren possessed no lands, and laid up no more corn than was necessary for their present consumption. Instead of the hoe, the plough, and the reaping-hook, the tools of the Dominican were, the pen, the ink-horn, and the copy-book, the books of the Sentences, and the Bible with glosses. In the school of the novices were going on Latin grammar and logic, and the sound of disputations might be heard in the cloister. This was all very unlike the houses of St. Bernard; but the needs of the Church had changed, and the Dominican had stopped up the gap left by the Cistercian. The

two Orders seemed to touch on Albigenian ground ; and St. Dominic stepped into the breach in which the body of St. Peter of Castelnau had fallen. But the spiritual and inward life of the two Orders was the same. St. Bernard's book on "the love of God,"<sup>2</sup> and on "the Steps of Pride," lay side by side with Peter Lombard in the library. "The novices were warned never to be so eager for knowledge as to neglect those things which pertain to religion, virtue, and charity. If strangers come to mingle in the disputations, they are not to be rudely set down,<sup>3</sup> and care is to be taken not to offend them. There was the same love for meditation in both Orders. At every turn of his busy life,<sup>4</sup> whether trudging along the road in his vocation as preacher, or walking in his black mantle in the convent garden ; whether on his knees in the church of his house at home, or in some distant land with Turks and heathens about him ; the friar was to be ever meditating on the great mysteries of the faith. The character which the Order aimed at forming in the Dominican was the same as is pictured in the books of St. Bernard and St. Aelred. "Novices are to be instructed," says Humbert, the fourth master, "that they be not anxious to see visions and to work miracles, for these profit little to salvation, and men are often deceived in such things. But let them rather look to doing good deeds, which profit to salvation. Again, if they have not those heavenly consolations which they hear that others have, let them not be downcast, but be assured that our Father, who looks solely to the uprightness of the will, sometimes withdraws these for our good, in His loving-kindness."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Brockie, vol. iv. p. 164.

<sup>4</sup> Brockie, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> Brockie, vol. iii. p. 173.

<sup>5</sup> Brockie, p. 165.

This, then, was the sort of community into which Richard retired after St. Edmund's death. Orleans was a university and an important one, for it was from thence that Cambridge derived its first professor of Aristotle's philosophy; and Orleans received all the learning of Paris in the voluntary secession of the masters and scholars in 1229. Richard had, however, little to do with the university; he did not want a degree, for a doctor in canon and civil law in Bologna had no need of graduating at Orleans. What he wanted was to be fitted for the duties of the priesthood, to receiving which his former employments had been an obstacle. What was his position in the Dominican convent does not quite appear, for he does not seem as yet to have formed a resolution of entering the Order. It is, however, probable that strangers were allowed to live in the houses of the friars, without being members of the community. The purposes for which the Order were instituted naturally brought with them great modifications of the ancient monastic system. The brethren were to go forth and make inroads into the territory of the world carrying the fiery cross with them, and gathering all men into Christ's army; while the older Orders set up the cross on high as a distant beacon, and a light upon a hill. Thus the Dominican convent was more like the head-quarters of a soldier, whose home is everywhere; while to the Cistercian the cloister was his home. In the same way the house of the Black Friar was planted in the midst of a town, while the Cistercian sat down in a secluded valley or a wild forest. The Dominican house was a place of learning; and when any famous doctor took the habit of the Order, students flocked eagerly to the schools of the convent to hear him. From all this resulted a greater mixture with the world than would

have been allowed in other Orders ; and the rule seems to have more regulations than are common in monastic constitutions for the entertainment of strangers.<sup>6</sup> Especial mention is made of those guests "who are so familiar as to be considered in the light of brethren," and it was probably amongst these that Richard was received into the house.<sup>7</sup>

Never in his life did Richard find so much peace as at this period. Orleans was a turbulent place as well as other universities, and not long before a dissolute scholar had raised a dreadful riot in its streets ; but the noise of the world died away before it reached the peaceful house of the Dominicans. Lowly and poor as were their convents and churches, in some few respects they relaxed the stern simplicity of the first Cistercian. The crucifixes were to be of painted wood, and no jewels were to be seen about the altar, but the chalice might be of gold,<sup>8</sup> and the priest for the week might wear a cope of silk, and the windows were to have a cross upon them. The garden was filled with red and white roses for the decoration of the altar, and the trees were disposed with an eye to beauty.<sup>9</sup> The shrubs were placed in long, regular alleys, so that every part of the garden was pervious to sight, and no thick shade was allowed where the brethren could steal from their companions. Here Richard could walk or sit under the trees watching the grave, silent figures of the friars in their white tunics and scapulars, and large black mantles without sleeves ;

<sup>6</sup> Vide Acta selecta cap. gen. ap. Martenne, Thesaurus, vol. iv. p. 1679, 20.

<sup>7</sup> Brockie, 185, c. 28, circa hospites extraneos, circa mensam extraordinariam, c. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Martenne, Thesaurus, vol. iv. 1677, 1680.

<sup>9</sup> Ut recreationem ex decore faciant. de off. ord. p. 189, c. 35.

or else he might obtain leave to speak to some brother in the parlour for the brethren might go thither for a time to relieve weariness and to get recreation.<sup>1</sup>

The mode of Dominican teaching at the time that Richard went to Orleans, was hardly as it was when he first knew them and their fellow-workers, the Grey Friars, at Oxford. It was still in progress and undergoing a change. St. Dominic had evidently been at first opposed to the scholastic movement. In 1221<sup>2</sup> he addressed a letter to his disciples, ordering them "to follow the divinely inspired scriptures, and ever in their studies to give their attention to what was useful, and to avoid curious questions." Again, it is said that he made little of the inventions of philosophy. A very few years, however, after the death of the Saint, John of St. Giles, a great schoolman and Parisian doctor, was won over to the Order; and the concourse of people who flocked to the convent of St. James, at Paris, obliged him to continue his public lectures. He had commented on the book of the Sentences, and followed the scholastic method, so that by a natural consequence of events, the new mode of teaching was admitted into the Dominican schools. Both methods subsisted amicably together for a long time, and the same person often gave lectures both on the Holy Scriptures and on the Sentences. Richard Fishacre<sup>3</sup> was lecturing on the Sentences, at Oxford, about the same time that Hugh of St. Cher was distinguished as a commentator at Paris. The schools were as yet in a fluctuating state, and St. Thomas had not yet appeared; so that the Dominicans, though many a distinguished schoolman had been converted by the

<sup>1</sup> De off. ord. 5 c. locutorium and Const. dist. 1. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Natalis Alex. Eccl. Hist. 7. 229.

<sup>3</sup> Trivet in ann. 1240, 1243.

burning words of their preachers, had not yet fulfilled their mission of fixing the doctrine of the schools on the basis of authority. About the very time when Richard took refuge at Orleans, disputations on strangely abstruse questions were carried on in the schools, so that the Bishop of Paris was obliged to stop the discussion of them,<sup>4</sup> by condemning all who took the wrong side in the dispute. In this unsettled state of the schools, it is not wonderful that Richard followed the old method of theological teaching. The practical bent of his mind led him away from the speculative theology of the schools ; and the friar who held the doctor's chair at Orleans was one who lectured on the text of the Holy Scripture, so that here he heard lectures on nearly all the sacred books, illustrated by comments from the Fathers of the Church. In this way the vast depths of the word of God were opened to him, as far as it can be mastered by man ; and the great mysteries of the faith came before him as they shine through the dark words of the Holy Scriptures, like stars appearing one by one in the firmament, not in the seemly order of a system, as they were afterwards arranged by the Angelic or Seraphic doctor. Not but that many a term which would now be called scholastic, was used by the good Friar in his lectures, for he could not make extracts from St. Athanasius, St. Hilary, and St. Augustine, without stumbling

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Paris says that the disputes on these points which were condemned were held by the Dominicans ; and it is remarkable that about the same time the general chapter of the Order commands certain condemned propositions to be erased out of the quaterni used in their schools. These quaterni were note books used by the students in which, probably, were written the subjects for disputation. It appears, then, that these propositions were not affirmed, but used as subjects for exercises. Vide Martenne, *Inst. cap. gen. in ann. 1243.*

on many instances of that magnificent phraseology in which the Church has delivered her idea of the faith. The book of the Sentences was in Richard's library;<sup>5</sup> and his theology was not of that misty sort which treats as scholastic controversy all that gives to the august edifice of revealed truth the well defined outline which is too stern for most men. The definitions of canon law had already taught him that the principles of the Church were not mere subjects of disputation in the schools, but substantive and living things, which were in action about him. Now the whole of the creed of the Church was brought before him as the key to the Holy Scriptures; and he saw that the key was the right one, from the prompt way in which it unlocked the sacred treasures of those inspired books.

How long Richard remained at Orleans does not appear; it could not have been more than two or three years.<sup>6</sup> It was long enough, however, to enable him to receive ordination at the hands of William de Bussi, the bishop of Orleans. The image of his beloved St. Edmund was present to his mind when he received the tremendous power of the priesthood; and he begged of the bishop to allow him to build an oratory in honour of that Saint, and there he used to offer up the holy Sacrifice of the mass. The awfulness of the charge committed to him pressed upon his soul, and he henceforth wore coarse and humble garments, and began to crucify his flesh, and to subdue it to his soul, by rigid austerities. He had hitherto been obliged to appear in the world as a great man, as befitted the chancellor of Canterbury; but now he was reduced to cast in his lot with

<sup>5</sup> This appears from his will, published in Dallaway's *Sussex*.

<sup>6</sup> There is a letter of his dated Orleans, April 20, 1242.



the poor ones of the earth, and to be of those who enter heaven by force. So severe were the mortifications that he used, that his health would have sunk under them, had he not reduced them at the remonstrances of his friends. Why he quitted Orleans does not appear, but the next situation in which we find him, is as a parish priest in England.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> It appears incidentally that he held the prebend of Dale, for Bocking relates the resignation with which he bore the news of the fraud of the man to whose care he had committed his property there. This seems to be the prebend of Deal which was attached to the priory of St. Martin's at Dover, but which at that time was in the gift of the archbishop.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE ELECTION.

RICHARD hoped to bury himself in his parish, and to spend the rest of his days in comforting the sick and needy, and in ministering to the spiritual wants of his flock. But there was to be no rest for him in miserable, distracted England. He had not been long in his native land when archbishop Boniface, St. Edmund's successor, called upon him to resume his functions as chancellor. Richard obeyed, but before doing so, he determined to preclude the possibility of his continuing under the yoke to his life's end, by making a vow to join the Order of his old friends, the Dominicans. His wish was to strip himself of all things for Christ's sake, to have no home, and to go about the world at the beck of his superior, carrying the Gospel into the heart of large towns, catechizing the ignorant poor, or it may be seeking martyrdom among the Turks. But God, who knows the talents which He himself has given to His servants, reserved him for a much more weary life. In 1244, after he had again appeared as chancellor in the archbishop's court, news reached him that he had been elected to the see of Chichester. No one in the world doubted the sincerity of the reluctance with which he accepted it, for it was one of those places which are not desirable pieces of preferment. It placed him in the very front of a battle in which St. Edmund had

died, broken-hearted. The circumstances which made the episcopal throne of Chichester so uncomfortable, must be given as briefly as is consistent with clearness.

Not the least portion of the slow martyrdom which the sainted archbishop had undergone, was the grief of seeing the sees of England so long lie vacant, from the interference of the king with the liberty of election. Since the blood of St. Thomas had been shed at Canterbury, the elections of bishops had been restored to the cathedral chapters. It is true that this was often a nominal restoration, by the fault of those who ought to have defended the Church. Soon after the death of St. Thomas, on one<sup>1</sup> occasion, Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, was heard to say that he had rather die than yield up one of the rights of the Church to the king. Hugh de Lacy, however, who was standing by, said, "There will be no need of dying, my lord. The king could not, if he wished it, find a clown in all the realm who would lay hands upon thee. The war is over if ye but keep what the martyr won." His successors did not keep it as they ought; but St. Thomas's work was not, by any means lost; for he established for ever as a principle that interference with the freedom of elections was a usurpation. Accordingly, the chapters had the choice of bishops, which ever since the conquest had belonged to the king and the bishops.<sup>2</sup> But the world only changed its tactics; there were numberless ways of frightening monks, which the kings of England duly put in practice. Henry the Third's methods were not less efficacious, though less savage than those of his ancestors. Not to have granted the chapter leave to elect would have raised a storm

<sup>1</sup> Giraldus Camb. ap. Wharton, Ang. Sac. 2, 430.

<sup>2</sup> Thomassin, 2 lib. 2. 34, 5, 8.

about his ears<sup>3</sup> which he had not the courage to abide ; besides which he was not irreligious, though he was weak and vacillating. His object in impeding the elections of bishops seems to have been less to keep the revenues in his hands than to have the means of rewarding his court-favourites, though of course the escheats<sup>4</sup> of rich archbishopricks and bishopricks were a tempting spoil for a profuse and needy monarch. His policy, therefore, was to cajole or to worry the chapters into receiving his nominees.<sup>5</sup> He had been known to declare that if they refused, the see should remain vacant for years. An expensive and weary law suit at Rome was sure to empty the treasury of a refractory chapter, and the peculiar circumstances of the time rendered it very likely that the royal legists would gain the day. So much had the aspect of parties changed in England, that there was then a prejudice at Rome in favour of the king's demands. This was partly the result of John's submission to the Holy See, partly of the present difficulties with which the Popes were surrounded in their contest with the emperor. The legate and the king were allied, because each was necessary to the other, and though Pope Innocent once expressly recalled Otto on account of his exactions, he was preserved in his authority at the request of the king, who was uneasy that he could not contend with his barons single-handed. This ill-omened connection

<sup>3</sup> Rex, licet diu recalcitraret, justæ postulationi (electionis) non potuit contradicere. Matth. Par. in ann. 1238.

<sup>4</sup> Matth. Parr. p. 581. in ann. 1242.

<sup>5</sup> It may be well to put together briefly an account of the principal elections of the time. In 1226, Richard de Marisco, bishop of Durham, died, and William, prior of Worcester, was elected in his place ; but the election was reversed at Rome at the king's instance in 1228, and Richard Poore, bishop of Salisbury, was translated to Durham.

as men said at the time,<sup>6</sup> between wolf and shepherd, was not, however, to last long. Tedious as were these delays in the administration of justice, and miserable as were the results of the long vacancy of the sees, they were but the natural effects which must follow every system of law. If men choose to get rid of wager of battle and trial by ordeal, they must submit to the tediousness of suits in chancery, and even canon law, magnificent system as it is, must be subject to all the imperfections of things on earth. It is the very essence of schism to quarrel with the Church, because of the imperfections of the human instruments with which she works. But justice comes in the long run, and it is wonderful to see how the scene changes after the death of the meek Saint who fled to Pontigny, because all he could do for the Church had failed, and prayer was the only weapon left. It appears that his intercession came to the aid of England, for it is wonderful how the

Matt. Par. pp. 332, 344. On his death, in 1237, the monks elect Thomas their prior, who was opposed by Henry. After a long law-suit at Rome, Thomas resigned his claim in 1240 ; and in 1241 was Nicholas Fareham confirmed, pp. 438, 541, 550. In 1238, Peter de Rupibus, bishop of Winchester died, and Ralph Neville, bishop of Chichester, was elected, which election the king, *per legistas Romipetas cassari procuravit*, 1239. The king's uncle is said to have obtained a promise of the see from the pope, but he died 1239. William de Raley, bishop of Norwich, was elected 1240, Ang. Sac. 1, p. 307, but owing to the king's opposition, not confirmed till 1243. Matt. Par. 473, 517, 605. In 1241, the see of Coventry fell vacant, and the abbot of Evesham was forced on the convent, but not confirmed. On his death, William the precentor was elected 1243. Wearied out with a law-suit he resigns 1245, and Roger, dean of Lincoln, elected, pp. 576, 598, 661. In the same year the election of the prior of Norwich was reversed, and the monks took care to elect a favourite of the king, p. 483.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. Par. 545. in ann. 1240.

horizon cleared up after he was gone. One by one the objects for which he had fought were won for the Church. In 1241, the see of Durham, which had so long languished without a pastor, was filled up. In 1244, king Henry, after having lavished a great sum at Rome, was finally disappointed in attempting to obtain a sentence against the bishop of Winchester. The hottest part of the battle was, however, still to come, and this was even more manifestly St. Edmund's work, for it was reserved for Richard, who had been brought up in his school to bear the full brunt of it.

The Chichester election was the first occasion on which Boniface, the new archbishop of Canterbury,<sup>7</sup> made his stand against Henry's usurpations. He was a prelate of the king's own choosing, one of Henry's foreign connections, who, to the great disgust of the nation, profited by their relationship with the queen. He was a Carthusian monk, though as yet but little distinguished, except for his rank, the riches of his family, and his commanding person. But there was something in the touch of a crosier which seemed to thrill through the whole man ; even courtiers and men of the world often found themselves in situations which they had little contemplated when they were nominated to their sees. Boniface had always led a life of irreproachable purity, and he now grievously disappointed Henry by taking part against him in ecclesiastical matters, and also in his contest with the barons. Boniface had also at his side a most uncompromising opponent of every abuse, wheresoever it existed. This was Richard's old master, Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lin-

<sup>7</sup> It is but little known that the traditionary beatification of Boniface has been confirmed by his present Holiness, and a service in his honour was allowed by the congregation of rites, to be used in Piedmont, his native country.

coln. Robert was a singular medieval anticipation of the English character of later times ; he had a very great sensitiveness to taxation, especially when it came in the shape of what he thought an abuse. Foreign interference was also his abhorrence, and whatever he felt he expressed in no measured terms. With all this he had many great qualities, and above all, an awful sense of the responsibility of the episcopal office. His rough words were perpetually sounding in the ears of the young archbishop. "If," he says in a letter to him, "he who has neglected to feed Christ in his members, to receive Him in his house, to clothe and to visit him, will go into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, of how much greater punishment is he worthy who slays Him in his members, or throws them into perplexity when he will appear in His presence at His tremendous judgment-seat. I tremble all over at this awful care of souls, lest perchance, instead of putting them into the charge of men who will give life, we should intrust them to murderers, and so be condemned at Christ's judgment-seat."

This was spoken of the care of a single parish, and Grosseteste's zeal was tenfold more in defence of the then liberty of the Church in the election of bishops. And when, in 1244, on the death of Ralph Neville, bishop of Chichester, Robert Passelew was, by the king's contrivance, elected to fill the vacant see, it was determined to oppose the nomination to the utmost. Grosseteste had an old ground of quarrel with Passelew, who was certainly most unworthy of the high place into which he was now thrust. He was the king's minister, and a most ingenious contriver of means of filling the king's empty coffers. Abbeyes, bishops, and barons all knew well Passelew's powers in wielding the regal right as a suzerain to the

best advantage. Robert, at one time, refused to institute him to a living even on the presentation of the archbishop of Canterbury, on the ground that, as royal justiciary, he was obliged to sit on causes incompatible with the sacerdotal office. It was, therefore, not wonderful that he was shocked at his election to the see of Chichester. The chapter had elected him, as was frequently the case, simply because they knew it would please the king, and save them from the usual vexatious process which the king employed in dealing with obstinate chapters. But the archbishop had a voice in the matter; as metropolitan, it belonged to him to confirm the election, and he assembled several of the bishops of the province to assist him in his decision. The canons of Chichester appeared, with their bishop elect, and Grosseteste, as an Oxford doctor and a learned theologian, was appointed to examine into the qualifications of Robert Passelew. We may judge of the confusion of the unhappy justiciary, when he got into the hands of the inexorable prelate. He soon found that theology was a different matter to deal with than the intricacies of feudal law. Grosseteste's hard questions confounded him; and the election was declared null by the archbishop, on the ground of incompetency. Then came the hard question, Who was to be bishop of Chichester? It required to be a man of no ordinary fortitude, for the mode of the election promised him a most uneasy seat. Boniface proposed Richard de Wych to the canons, and all unanimously elected him.

Richard had a miserable prospect before him when he consented to the election. In ordinary circumstances the tremendous responsibility of such a cure of souls would have been enough to sadden him; but the dreary prospect which he had in view increased the difficulties tenfold. A law suit with the king was inevitable, and then there



was the anxious question, how the court of Rome would look upon the matter. It was not a case of equity, for that would easily have been decided ; but Rome had to judge according to rule, and the election was really of such a nature, that its validity admitted of more than one doubt. The question was, whether the archbishop had a right to provide, as the phrase was, a pastor for the church of Chichester. That the metropolitan had the right of confirming the election of his suffragan, and that the archbishop and bishops of the province, in matter of fact, were usually present, and controlled the election, no one doubted ; but for the archbishop, by the judgment of his own will, to make a provision of the Church, was a bold step,<sup>8</sup> when his decision might be reversed at Rome. It was very like assuming to himself a power which the Pope had refused to grant St. Edmund ; for the Saint, shortly before his retirement to Pontigny, had vainly wished to obtain the right of appointing to sees which had lain vacant for six months.<sup>9</sup> All these were vast difficulties in Richard's way, not to mention the certainty of a persecution from the king ; but he remembered St. Edmund, and consented to bear the weary weight. Scarcely had he done so, when he found himself at once in the midst of the sea of troubles which he had expected. By the advice of his friends, he went to the king, bringing with him letters from the archbishop, and claiming to be put in possession of the

<sup>8</sup> It appears from the bull of Pope Innocent, published in Rymer's *Fœdera*, that Henry's grounds of opposition were *quod Cantuariensis Archiepiscopus electionem cassaverit minus juste ac pro suæ voluntatis arbitrio providerit eidem ecclesiæ de pastore*.

<sup>9</sup> Thomassin, 2. 2. c. 34, 7, where he adds, *Tunc quidem ea non fuit in Pontifice quam ecclesiæ necessitas desiderabat vel animi magnitudo et constantia vel certe potestas*.

temporalities of his see. The particulars of the interview are not on record, but the result of it was precisely what Richard had anticipated. Henry was not at all disposed to consent to an election in which sentence had been passed on his own favourite, and in which he had not been consulted ; an election had also taken place at Coventry against his will, and it looked very like a conspiracy of the bishops to counteract the evil influence which was exerted over the chapters. His answer then to Richard was an order to his officers to take the revenues of the see of Chichester into their hands.

Richard found himself therefore again on the wide world. This was a very different life from that which he had led in the Dominican convent at Orleans, and which he had again expected to lead according to his vow. He had now but one thing to do, and that was to fly to the Holy See. If the Pope reversed his election, he would then be free to fulfil his vow ; but if it was confirmed, then, not only was he bishop of Chichester, but his vow was at once null and void. Where he spent the year 1244 and the beginning of the next is not known, but the next place where we find him is at the council of Lyons, which began its sittings in June 1245 ; hither Richard came to present himself before the Pope, and to hear sentence pronounced upon his cause.

It was a most critical time for the Holy See, when Richard arrived at Lyons. Innocent had then no home, for he had quitted Rome, thinking that it was no longer safe for him to remain there amidst so many of the emperor's partisans. St. Louis had been prevented by his barons from receiving him, and Henry had refused to admit him into England. He had therefore taken refuge at Lyons, which was then an independent city under its archbishop. Innocent came thither with the stern de-

termination of proclaiming open war against Frederic, and of perishing if need be in the struggle. It was here first, as tradition says, that by his order the cardinals put on crimson robes to intimate that they must be ready to shed their blood for the church. The council was assembled that the voice of Christendom might pronounce a solemn excommunication against Frederic. Every one felt that this was a final act, and that the scabbard would be forever thrown away. All men trembled when the assembled prelates extinguished their tapers, and pronounced the awful sentence. The emperor's envoys retired beating their breasts and saying: this is a day of woe and misery. At such a time as this, when it was natural for Innocent to gather all the friends that he could, it seemed unlikely that he would offend Henry by confirming Richard's election, when he might find many good reasons for reversing it.<sup>1</sup> Another circumstance which rendered Henry's friendship the more necessary, was, that England was the principal fountain from which the court of Rome drew its revenues for the prosecution of the contest; and at that very time a strong remonstrance was presented by the English barons against the exactions of the papal emissaries. Henry, therefore, seemed to be the Pope's only stay in England.

Two affairs, therefore, came before Innocent from this country, each proceeding from very different quarters, and each illustrating the very different aspects under which the Holy See was there considered. First came the clamorous and vehement complaints of the nobles, in

<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the so-called Matthew of Westminster's crabbed sentence in ann. 1245, it is evident that mere worldly policy would certainly have induced Innocent to favour Henry. Matthew Paris, with much more fairness, seems to think that the king deserved to have his power curtailed.

the name of the whole realm of England, against the appointment of foreigners to English benefices, and the levying of money from the abbeys and bishopricks of the land for the carrying on of the war with Frederic. Whether these complaints were just or not, this is not the place to consider. That abuses did exist, there seems no harm in supposing, for Innocent himself allows that the introduction of foreigners into English benefices was against his will. The circumstance is only brought forward here to shew the sort of spirit which existed in this country towards Rome. It was the natural consequence of a vast system, in which the governed always take very different views of things from the government. The nationality of England was offended by the introduction of foreign clerks into its rich benefices, and the exportation of its riches for the support of a foreign war. What was Frederic to them, and what were the Lombard cities to them, isolated islanders as they were, in their sea-girt fastness? Rightly or wrongly, such was their tone, and bitter were the fruits which this English nationality produced, when men in after times made shipwreck of their faith, because of abuses in the administration of their rulers.

But, on the other hand, came Richard, to throw himself and his cause on the protection of the Holy See, ready to put himself forward in the battle of the Church, if her cause was entrusted to him, or to go back to his Dominican convent, if the Pope refused to confirm his election. He was a type of a different spirit, but of one not less English than the other, for loyalty to authority is a characteristic of England, no less than a suspicion of foreigners, and a sensitiveness to abuses. He found the king's proctors ready, with case and precedent, to shew that the king had ever had a voice in the election of bishops, ever since the days of William the Conqueror.

Notwithstanding, however, the difficulties of his position, Innocent saw that there was too much at stake in England to suffer political considerations to step in. He answered Henry that it was quite true that religious kings had exercised the right of confirming elections, but that he had so abused this privilege by rejecting canonical elections on frivolous pretences, that the Church would no longer intrust him with the sacred powers which he had abused. At the same time, as the archbishop's provision was irregular, Innocent informed Henry that the election of Richard took effect from his own confirmation, which he granted in the plenitude of his apostolic power, not from the provision of Boniface.<sup>2</sup> The Pope then proceeded to consecrate Richard, and the bishop elect of Coventry, who had come to Lyons for the same purpose, with his own hand.<sup>3</sup> Innocent could hardly have done otherwise, even if he had wished, for it is a function of the Holy See to take up the cause of the oppressed.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. Par. in ann. 1245, pp. 656, 661, and Innocent's bull in Rymer's *Fœdera*.

<sup>3</sup> The Burton annals say, that Roger de Wesham, bishop of Coventry, was consecrated with St. Richard, and, according to Chesterfield, Roger's consecration took place at the time of the Council of Lyons, Ang. Sac. 1,440. The date of Innocent's bull confirms this. Dat. Lugd. 12. Kal. Aug. Pontificatus nostri anno tertio. Le Neve, by mistake, makes Roger to have been consecrated in January.

## CHAPTER IV.

RICHARD A BISHOP.

RICHARD left Lyons far otherwise than when he came to it, in the guise of a suppliant, not knowing how his cause would fare. He was now a prince of the Church, and the ring was on his finger by which he had been wedded to the Church of Christ, to be her faithful guardian. He was now the pastor of many thousand sheep; and woe to him if, by his negligence, any one was lost. But externally he was very little different; there was not a more apostolic prelate in the world than Richard, for the king had seized his temporalities. He had no barony, no palace, no armed retainers, no fine stud of horses, and no splendid clothes. He was to be supported in his high station solely by his personal character and the sanctity of his office. He was on the eve of a struggle in which, to all appearance, the world had everything and he had nothing. In this state of things, there was one place to which his eye naturally turned, and that was Pontigny. He went there to kneel at the tomb of his friend, to beg for his intercession with God, that he might have patience in the weary contest. However desolate was his present condition, still he had much to be thankful for. His life was no longer aimless, as it was when, five years before, he had gone from Pontigny, having buried his friend, and, with him, all that he loved upon earth. He now at least had a work to do, and

a principle to maintain in the Church of Christ. He therefore rose from his knees with a lightened heart, feeling sure that his sainted friend had already interceded for him, and would help him with his prayers in the arduous work which awaited him.

Richard found things precisely as he expected ; as soon as he landed in England, the first news which met him was, that the king had not only taken into his possession all his manors,<sup>1</sup> but had forbidden any one to lend him money. "What was he to do," says Bocking, "whither to turn, where to betake himself?" The property of bishops, at that time, consisted entirely in the produce of their lands, which they received in kind, so that he was absolutely penniless. It was to a place where we would least expect to find him that he first bent his steps. He went straight to king Henry's court, though he was perfectly aware of the reception which he was sure to meet. He, however, bore a mandate from the Holy See, enjoining Henry to acknowledge him as bishop of Chichester, and he resolved to deliver it in person. The result was as he expected ; the king stormed, the nobles laughed at the poor figure of the lowly suppliant, who knocked at the palace gates to sue for his bishoprick ; and the clerkings who hung about the court, expecting benefices from the royal bounty, looked with angry eyes upon the man who had run counter to the maxims of the court, by obtaining, at the hands of Christ's vicar, what the king's lordship had refused him. Richard went quietly through

<sup>1</sup> The Bollandists say that the king at first only made a reservation of the possessions of the see, but after his consecration confiscated them. Matthew Paris says, that Martin, the pope's agent, had an eye to the revenues of Chichester. This seems to be an instance of the good monk's Anglicanism.

their ranks, and passed on to his diocese a beggar. He had no home to which he could turn. The gates of the many houses which were his by right were closed against him ; in his very episcopal city he was a stranger. That God, who never deserts his own, raised up for him a generous friend in Simon, a poor parish priest, who offered to share with him the revenue which he derived from his benefice. Not far from Chichester, in a nook formed by a bend of the low shore of Sussex, was the little village of Ferring, of which Simon was the priest. This was the only spot in his diocese where the prelate could find rest ; all men feared the king, except Simon ; and God rewarded the good man's courage, for his barns never failed, and he had always wherewithal to support his illustrious guest. It was in pure faith that Simon had received him as his bishop, and, above all, a bishop suffering for the Church ; but when he saw him more closely, and witnessed his gentle deportment and his unwearied patience, while all the world was against him, he learned to reverence him as a man of God. He loved to watch him as he walked in the little garden of the parsonage, wrapt in meditation, or else stooping down to watch the unfolding of the flowers. Richard turned gardener in the summer, and it was amazing to see him intent on all the details of budding and grafting, as though a king's wrath was not hot against him, and he were again a country lad as he had been in his boyhood, living an out-of-door life among bees and flowers, and listening to the song of the birds in Feckenham forest. Simon looked upon the plants which he had tended as hallowed by his hand. He saw the bishop once, with his own hand, skilfully budding a shrub in the garden. Soon after Richard was called away from Ferring on the business of the diocese ; Simon watched the bud take root ;



already it had put forth tiny leaves, when, by the carelessness of the gardener, some animals strayed into the garden and destroyed the plant. When Richard returned, about the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul, Simon pointed mournfully to the shrub, and said that his work was spoiled. "Not so," said Richard, and, taking his pruning knife, he inserted another bud, and this time it prospered, and the same year it blossomed and bore fruit.

Richard, however, had no idea of remaining in quiet, listening to the sound of the gentle waters of the Arun, which flows into the sea hard by. He was not a whit the less a bishop because he was poor, so Ferring was but his head-quarters. He became at once a missionary bishop, such as Sussex had not seen since the days of St. Wilfred. Instead of being a great man, feasted to-day by the lord of Eu, and to-morrow banqueting in the halls of Arundel castle, he was the bishop of the poor. It was a rough life for one who had been hitherto a peaceful student, and who had lived so long under the blue sky of Italy. He had to wander up and down among the poor fishing-villages along the coast; the bleak wind of the downs, and the chill mists which rise from the low marshy grounds near the seashore, must be alike to him who had no house of his own to receive him at the end of a hard day's work during his visitation. And did he never regret the poverty which exposed him to such hardships? For one reason he did regret it, because he saw so much misery in his wanderings among the peasantry, which he could not by any means relieve. But otherwise it would have been absurd to regret what gave him a power which king Henry himself might have envied. Riches of course have a power of their own, but then it is a cumbrous, unelastic force, which is useful only where it can be brought to bear. For instance a high and mighty

bishop, travelling with a long train of attendants and sumpter horses, could not be lodged in any little village by the roadside. Besides, when the poursuivants of my lord bishop come galloping into a hamlet, announcing that the great man is coming with all his retinue, and lodgings must be procured, and the whole countryside scoured to get provisions ; then men think much more of the baron than of the pastor. They open their eyes and gaze upon the pageant, and think that the man environed with all this form is a being far above them. Many a corner of the diocese must escape visitation in such a sweeping journey as this. But Richard was like a keen two-edged sword, penetrating into the very heart of his diocese. The bishop seemed ubiquitous, here, there, and everywhere. Not a village hidden in the most lonely valley, surrounded by the most pathless down, nestling at the foot of the wildest cliff which stretched into the sea, could hide itself from his presence. Along the low, willowy banks of the Lavant, in the woody vale of Arundel, among the hills which stretch their grassy sides down to Lavington and Graffham, north, south, east, and west, every nook was searched, every corner known, as familiarly as a landlord knows his estate. Even down the loneliest glade of St. Leonard's forest the bishop might be seen riding, with his cross-bearer before him. This is, however, but an external way of viewing his work. He knew the wants of his flock much better than the face of the country. His whole diocese lay in his mind's eye like a map ; here is a hard-working priest, who feeds the sheep committed to his charge by Him who died for them ; there is a careless and sensual clergyman, who lets his flock wander out of the way in the wilderness. Here is a region seamed and scarred by sin ; there is a spot on which the eye of a pastor may dwell with delight. Let

vice turn and double as it might, there was Richard ready to confront it, and to exorcise it, crozier in hand. However deeply the poor penitent hid her shame, there was Richard ready to seek her out, and to speak over her the healing words of absolution.

Many a man, in hearing of all this, will envy Richard and wish to be like him. And doubtless it was a joyful thing to go about everywhere doing good, to catechise village children, to administer the Holy Sacraments, to smooth the rough path of life for the wretched, to bind up the broken-heart, to take the hard hand of the rude fisherman, whom misery had brutalized, and to lead him to look for happiness beyond the grave. But men forget that this is but one side of the picture. There was watching and weariness, anxiety and disappointment. However much he was courted by the few who were good, the mass of men were cold, dull, and impenetrable as ever. Often had he the misery of seeing them for whom he had wept, fasted, and prayed, at last giving themselves up to vice, and going headlong into profligacy. The consolations were few and far between; but the weary work was ever recurring. Besides which, the Church was suffering for his sake; and however little he cared for riches and honours, he was obliged boldly to claim the rights of the Church, which were entrusted to his hands. Here was matter enough for overflowing bitterness. In his pursuit of his rights, he was derided and scoffed at by the profligate, and treated with silent scorn by the proud. He had to stand as a suppliant at the king's gate, among lacqueys and menials, demanding what was his own. Yet, strange to say, this was the very part of all his troubles in which he rejoiced the most, because it brought him nearest to his Lord. Cold, hunger, and poverty, the weary journeyings, the incessant and wearing

labours of the confessional in his diocese, were nothing ; they brought with them their reward, for the eye of sickness and sorrow brightened when it saw him ; he passed among beseeching crowds wherever he went, and tears of joy gushed out at his approach. Men can do a great deal amid smiling looks and sympathizing friends ; but when his unwelcome figure presented itself at Westminster, it seemed to cast a shade wherever he went. Every face wore a scowl of hatred or an intense sneer as he approached. Nothing could have supported him here but the remembrance of Him, who was mocked by Herod and his men-at-arms, of Him, at whom men wagged their heads, when He was hanging on the cross.

This thought was the secret of his cheerful countenance and his undismayed heart amidst all his troubles. Few men knew the secret spring of his light-heartedness. The dean and the canons were puzzled, and knew not what to make of it. Once, when he returned from one of these fruitless expeditions to the court, the chapter was sitting about him in mournful silence, with sad and downcast looks, but he sat in the midst of them with a bright and sunny countenance ; and looking about him with a smile, he said : "Do you not understand these words of Scripture ? 'The apostles departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were thought worthy to suffer shame for His sake.' I tell you all, that by God's grace, this tribulation of ours will turn to joy." The chapter certainly had reason to wonder, for he always came back from the king's presence like a man who had just been adorned with a new title, with his blushing honours thick upon him. What sort of honours he obtained there, we may judge from Bocking's narrative. "One day, when he had entered the king's palace at Windsor, one of those who are called marshals looked

at him, with a savage countenance, and said, ‘How hast thou dared to set thy foot here, knowing well, as thou dost, that the king is very angry with thee?’ But he, shame-faced man as he was, felt very much confused, and went quietly out of the palace, to take his place in the open air with the men of low degree, who were waiting outside. He did not curse in his heart, or murmur; but, on the contrary, gave thanks to God for those who persecuted and spoke evil of him. From thence, too, he followed the king’s steps through dry and barren places, in toil and labour, for he was one of those who travel with an empty purse. Whenever he went into the king’s presence, he was saluted by the courtiers with jests and gibes. But, like the apostle, being reviled, he blessed; being persecuted, he suffered it; yea, from what he had suffered with St. Edmund, he learned patience.”

However, patience was not the only characteristic of this part of his life; not one jot of his episcopal authority did he abate during this time of his trial. One of the first acts of his episcopate was to hold a synod, the constitutions of which still exist, and are called after his name. They begin in a strain as high as if the bishop were surrounded with all the splendour which belonged to his predecessors. “As by the office committed to us,” he says, “we are bound to provide for the salvation and the correction of those put under our charge, lest, under pretence of ignorance, any one should quit the path of justice, or should arise in his presumption, and dare to act contrary to the canons of the Church, we have thought it right to put out certain things in the presence of this holy council, lest we, who are bound to give an account of others, should have to answer for our negligence in the terrible judgment.” And he proceeds to lay down rules for the administration of the sacra-

ments, which he enumerates, and especially of penance. Henry might take away his lands, but the tremendous power of the keys he could neither give nor take, so that Richard's constitutions are not the less stringent because he had no temporal means of enforcing his decrees. On this point, his rules are singular anticipations of the precision and clearness of the provisions of later times, though they keep more closely to the sternness of ancient discipline. A guilty baron, if he had come before Richard in the confessional, could not, in the case of certain crimes, get rid of more painful penance by giving alms.<sup>2</sup> The penance was ever to be directed to the rooting up of the evil habit of vice. "Satisfaction," according to the constitutions, "consists in the cutting off of the causes of the sin. Fasting is the proper antidote to gluttony and lust; prayer to pride, envy, anger, and sloth; alms to covetousness and avarice." The instruction of the people is also especially provided for, and every priest is enjoined to teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Angelic Salutation, and the Creed, all in the English language.

The instruction of the simple and the ignorant was the chief aim of the whole of Richard's teaching. He was a poor man amongst the poor; and it was remarkable how he thus had to fulfil the functions of the Order which he had wished to enter. "Oh, Richard, servant of Christ," exclaims friar Ralph, in describing this portion of his history, "think upon the condition of life to which, in earlier days, thou didst propose to bind thyself by a vow; and though God ordered it otherwise, and thou

<sup>2</sup> Nullus sacerdos in furto, usura, rapina et fraude injungat missarum celebrationem vel eleemosynarium largitionem, sed potius ut fiat restitutio vel quibus injuriatum est, vel eorum heredibus, si extiterint. *Constit. ap. Wilkins*, vol. i. p. 689.

couldst not accomplish thy wish, yet rejoice now, for thou hast obtained grace virtually to fulfil thine intention. Dost thou ask what life I mean, I answer the life of a preaching friar ; which consists in preaching Christ in poverty, without possessing anything ; in labouring for the salvation of souls, and in toiling cheerfully in the harvest of the Lord, dependent on God's bounty, without earthly recompense. Be patient, and work bravely the work which thou hast in hand, that thou mayest receive at once the heavenly reward due to voluntary poverty, and that which will be given to the worthy pastor." Richard was, at this time, a very preaching friar, in the guise of a bishop.

## CHAPTER V.

## RICHARD AMONG THE POOR.

THERE is joy in the episcopal city of Chichester, and the bells of the churches are heard ringing over the green meadows in which it lies. There is a thrill of joy throughout Sussex, in the huts of the fishermen and the cottage of the labourer, for news has come that after two weary years of waiting, the bishop is to receive his own at last. His holiness the Pope had written to two English prelates, bidding them go to King Henry, and tell him that if he did not restore its lands to the see of Chichester, sentence would be pronounced against him throughout the realm. So the king had consented, and Richard might now enter his cathedral city as became a bishop. Doubtless the townsmen cried, Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord, when he entered Chichester; and the canons entoned the *Te Deum* when the bishop, with his jewelled mitre on his head and his crozier in his hand, entered his cathedral and was enthroned in St. Wilfrid's seat. So all on a sudden Richard found himself a great man in the realm; and all the manors of the see were put into his hands, Manwood and Aldingbourn, and Amberley and Bishopstone, and all the rest, with the great garden surrounding the little chapel, without the walls of the city, and its wooded parks of King's-wood and Deepmarsh, filled



with deer and game of all sorts.<sup>1</sup> All these were his, and we must now see how he could play the baron as well as the missionary bishop.

About the time of his returning prosperity,<sup>2</sup> St. Edmund was again brought before him, as he had been at every previous turn of his life. In June 1247 he crossed the sea and went to Pontigny, the old place of his exile, to be present at the translation of the relics of his friend. He found himself here a great man among the great men of the earth. He was accompanied by Edmund de Lacy, a religious young nobleman, who had put himself under his direction, and who would have been Earl of Lincoln, had not God taken him to himself by a premature death. Cardinals were there in their red robes, with archbishops, bishops, and mitred abbots. At this point of his history, if not before, Richard came across St. Louis, for he was there too, then in the prime of his life, with the cross on his shoulder. Blanche of Castile was there, and Isabella of France, the sister of St. Louis, who refused the hand of the emperor's son to dedicate herself to Christ. Richard gazed on the face of his friend, and imprinted on his memory once more every line of it, for the body was still uncorrupt, and the Saint lay in his pontifical robes like one asleep. When the ceremony was over, and he had prayed for his intercession through the rest of his weary pilgrimage, he hurried back to his flock. Bernard

<sup>1</sup> v. cart. ap. Dugdale, 6, 1170.

<sup>2</sup> The precise time when Henry restored the temporalities of the see to St. Richard is not known, but it must have been about the time that St. Edmund's translation took place, for it is said to have been two years after his consecration in the middle of 1245. The property of the see of Coventry was restored in 1246, apparently about the feast of St. Mark, but no mention is there of the see of Chichester. Matt. Par. in ann.

de Sully, bishop of Auxerre, tried to keep him, for he wanted his advice in the management of his diocese ; but Richard said that he should have to answer not for the church of Auxerre but of Chichester, so he went straight from Pontigny to Whitsand, intending to cross over at once to England.<sup>3</sup> But when he arrived at the sea-shore, he found the wind blowing and the waves high, and the master of the vessel shook his head and said that he would not venture to set sail in such boisterous weather. Richard remained for some time at Whitsand, and still the gale blew, and the clouds looked black ; at last he sent for the captain and answered his doubtful words by saying that the power of God was greater than the storm, and could allay the winds and the waves. The sailor then said that he would venture, so the bishop and his train embarked. But they had not been long on the water, when the wind rose to a hurricane, and the sea tossed about the vessel so that she became unmanageable. The bishop's attendants entreated the captain to put back, but it was too late, for they were at the mercy of the waves. Then in their extreme peril William, the bishop's chaplain, besought him to give his blessing. He had been standing calmly and without fear, looking on the tossing waters around, for he had made up his mind that God would preserve them. At William's earnest request, however, he lifted up his hand and gave his blessing. Soon after this they saw that they were making progress, and approaching the white cliffs of Dover ; and when they landed they found that they had left behind all the other vessels which had quitted the harbour with them, and which were still tossing on the waves, dispersed on every side by the

<sup>3</sup> It appears that he was anxious to return on account of a famine which was then raging.

tempest. They returned thanks to God, and always attributed their safety to the presence of Richard.

It was a joyful moment for Richard, when after all the dangers of sea and land, he caught sight of the long roof and the low tower of his cathedral rising above the houses of Chichester, to welcome him as he came back. Our good friend Ralph Bocking has left us a most undigested series of anecdotes as to this part of his life; and out of all this mass we can only get one clear idea, that his life was very like what it was when he was in Simon's house, and yet very different. It was very different, because he had large resources at his command; and yet it was very like, because he was always poor, for he gave away all he had. Earls and countesses, great men and fine ladies, congregate about him, and when they come to see him he gives them a noble banquet, with gold and silver cups; and doubtless the huge boar's-head and the venison of Deepmarsh graced the board, and the wines of France sparkled in the goblets. And seneschals and bailiffs and men at arms appear about him, and my lord bishop has his prisons to keep malefactors (though not very secure, as we shall see) and his courts to judge them. And yet in the great hall of the episcopal palace we see nearly the same figure as in the poor parsonage at Ferring, except that the dress is neater and not threadbare, and the forehead is more bald,<sup>4</sup> and the long neck seems thinner, and the cheek-bones more prominent, and the eyes more worn with watching.<sup>5</sup> He used to wear the same dress as his clerks and chaplains, his fellows, as he called them, a white tunic, and over it a pallium and a cope. He

<sup>4</sup> Quia calvus sum. Boll. p. 297.

<sup>5</sup> Ex tunc in proprii corporis castigatione rigidor—vigiliis refocillavit spiritum. Boll. p. 294.

used to keep open house, and, as Bocking says, "his charity was more capacious than the ample halls of his palace." He used to sit at the head of his table, his cheerful face lightening the whole company. He delighted in conversation, and if anything remarkable was said by any one, he did not forget to write it down in his common-place book. I remember once that he said to me, "the words which you spoke yesterday, I have this night written down in my book with mine own hand. And when dinner was over and the usual grace was said, he used to return thanks with his hands and eyes raised, so audibly that all around were excited to devotion. In conclusion, he always gave the blessing in these words: God give us help as He knoweth our wants."

What was, however, the hidden life of this bishop of cheerful face and affable manners? He knew well the awful responsibility of his charge, and that the bishop stands in the place of the chief Shepherd of the sheep, so he resolved to imitate his Lord in His crucifixion and His sufferings. So while his table was laden with viands, he hardly touched meat, but used to dine on bread soaked in wine. "When there were on his table, lamb, or kid, or chicken, he used, half in jest and half in earnest, to say, 'If ye could speak, how would ye blame our gluttony. We are the cause of your death. Ye innocent ones, what have ye done worthy of death?'"<sup>6</sup> Beneath his neat white garments he wore hair cloth, and over that a weighty shirt of steel rings, which pressed heavily on his tender limbs. At times he carried next to his skin chains, with steel points, and these tore his innocent flesh, which, by the testimony of

<sup>6</sup> Boll. p. 292.

his confessors, had never known sin. After many hours spent at night in prayer and meditation on his knees, his face bathed in tears, he would throw his weary limbs upon his bed, which was a common mattress, though it was surrounded by the rich hangings which befitted his station. So long were his watchings, that he was sometimes found in the morning stretched with his face on the pavement, where his exhausted frame had sunk in sleep the night before. And notwithstanding his late hours, he was up with the lark, ready to say the office, for if he was not up before the birds, he would say, Shame on me! the birds, though they are not rational creatures, have been beforehand with me in singing their songs in praise of their Creator. And yet so merciful to others was he, though so ruthless to himself, that when his clerks were not up in time to say the office with him, he would go away to his private prayers, muttering to himself, Sleep on now, and take your rest. And this, be it remembered, was not a hermit in a desert, nor a monk in a cloister; he was living in the world, a man of business, who kept open house and received company. He rode on horseback about his diocese, preaching and administering the sacraments to his flock. Truly he was the minister of Him who sat down wearied under the burning mid-day sun, and asked for a cup of water to quench His thirst; who spent whole nights on the cold mountains in prayer; and whose flesh at last was torn with cruel scourgings, and pierced with nails for our sake.

And not one jot of even what the world would call usefulness was lost to his diocese by Richard's austerities. From knowing himself what suffering meant, his heart was overflowing with unbounded charity to all sufferers amongst his flock.

No curate in all the diocese worked harder than the bishop. It was among the poor especially that the overflowing charity of his heart expanded itself. He stooped down to their sorrows, and felt more at home among them than in his episcopal palace. "Whenever," says his chronicler, "he entered the towns and villages of his diocese, he made diligent inquiry as to the sick and infirm amongst the poor, and not only assisted them with alms, but was wont to visit them and console them by his presence. He cheered them with the spiritual food of the word of God; he spoke to them of patience, and bade them recollect how the fiery trial of poverty cleansed the stains of sin, and what joys in the life to come would be the result of a real poverty, that is, of one willingly borne. This spiritual alms, this feeding of the poor ones of Christ with the sweetness of God's word, was the work which most came home to his heart. He generally performed it himself, but sometimes entrusted it to the Black or Grey Friars." And it was not only those who came directly before him who felt the effects of his charity; he went out of his way to mingle in the sorrows of the fatherless and the widow. He used to order the parish priests of the manor on which he happened to be residing, to reserve for him the burial of the poor who died while he was there. Parochial work was what he loved best, and, whenever he could, priest, and not bishop, of Chichester, was the name by which he called himself. He never forgot that he had once been himself, at one time, a poor student, at another a poor priest, and so his love extended itself over these two classes. He built an hospice, to which priests who were aged, blind, or in delicate health might retire

and be in peace ; and he was known, when his coffers were empty, to give to poor scholars gilt goblets off his table, bidding them go and pawn them and take the money, and "we will redeem them," he said, "in God's own time." Even the priest who had ill-treated him in his youth and wasted the money which he had entrusted to him, was relieved by him when he became a bishop.

He soon had opportunities enough of active charity in his diocese, for, in the year 1247,<sup>7</sup> a grievous famine broke out in England, at the time that he hurried back from Pontigny, at the peril of his life. As soon as he was installed in his diocese, he recalled his brother<sup>8</sup> to his side, and made him the seneschal of his household. Since Richard had left his home in Worcestershire, this brother had become a soldier and a knight, so he was well qualified to manage the extensive lands of the see, and to rule over the episcopal household. Bocking says that he was a prudent man ; however, his prudence, which suited well with Richard's purse, did not suit as well with his charity. The see was burdened with debt, for the king's officers had rifled the manors to good purpose before they gave them up, and the seneschal was anxious to see it flourish again before he ventured to be generous. This did

<sup>7</sup> The Bollandists quote a manuscript of Radulfus Cestrensis to shew that this famine was in the year 1245. It adds, however, that it occurred the year of St. Edmund's translation, which shows that it was in 1247.

<sup>8</sup> Bocking says that he was *militaris ordinis*. This might seem to imply that he belonged to one of the military orders ; it probably, however, only means that he was a knight. Richard, in his will, leaves some money to his brother if he chooses to go to the Holy Land. It probably was this brother, though Bocking gives him a different name.

not, however, answer Richard's purpose at all; the poor people were dying with famine about him, and his kind heart could not bear their complaints. "Is it just, my dear brother," he would then often say, "or right, in the sight of God, that we should use gold and silver on our table, while Christ, in His poor ones, is tormented with hunger?" And then the thought of St. Edmund came across him; and he added, "I have learned from my father to eat and drink out of a wooden platter and a wooden goblet. Let my gold and silver plate be broken up, and let them go to the feeding of His members who has redeemed us, not with perishable gold and silver, but with His precious blood. There is my horse, too; he is a good and valuable one; sell him, I pray thee, and feed Christ's poor ones with the price of him." His brother was obliged to obey, but it went sorely against the grain, and he determined to manage the business in his own way, without telling the bishop. Richard, shortly after, during his visitation of the nunnery of Rusper, in the northern part of the county, found that the famine had reached the poor sisters, and their granaries were nearly empty. They served their Lord in silence and contentedness, in the loneliest part of the weald, and the world which lay beyond their solitude had forgotten them. His heart was touched with compassion, and he ordered his brother to give to the nuns a certain sum every year. The seneschal, like an old soldier as he was, determined to manage the matter craftily, so that the bishop's coffer should not suffer; so, without telling him anything, he did not pay the pension to the convent. He, however, nearly lost his brother's favour, for Richard, when he found it out, reproved him sharply, and said that he should



be master in his own house ; and asked him if he thought the canons of Chichester such fools as to elect his seneschal their bishop, instead of himself.<sup>9</sup>

It was at this time that God came to aid the efforts of His servant to relieve the wretched state of the poor. Richard was at Cakeham, one of his manors, a few miles from Chichester. His house lay near a long reach of low sandy beach, which separated it from the sea ; it seems to have been a favourite residence of his, on account of the pure air which he inhaled from the fresh breezes, while his eye could wander undisturbed over the waters, till it rested in the distance on the green shores of the Isle of Wight. Thither the poor starving people had followed him, for the famine still continued, and whole families had nothing to eat. Even the bishop's stores had nearly failed ; and so little corn was in his granaries, that the officers of his household fancied that they had not enough to fill their hungry mouths for one day. They, therefore, hit upon the expedient of boiling beans, to satisfy at least a part of them. Richard happened to pass through the place where this cooking was going on, and perceived this new indication of the soreness of the famine. He said nothing, but lifted up his hand and gave the blessing. When the officers distributed the food to the poor, they found that it sufficed for all, though they had thought that it was barely enough for a third part of them, and they ascribed the superabundance to the merits of the bishop.

When the famine was over, and there was again

<sup>9</sup> It appears that certain livings were appropriated to the nunnery in 1247. This matter must have passed through Richard's hands, as it could not be done without the bishop's leave.

corn in the land, the love and reverence which they felt for their bishop increased tenfold. They had recourse to him in all their little wants, and they believed that they derived virtue from the blessing which he gave them, as he passed among them. One day, as he was crossing the bridge of Lewes, he saw some fishermen throwing their nets into the water. One of the household of the archbishop of Canterbury, who was standing on the bridge watching them, cried out to him, "O my lord, we have toiled a long time, and caught nothing ; wait now, if it please thee, a little, till we try once more, and give us thy blessing, as we let down the net." Richard smiled, but did as they asked him, and said "Let it down now, in the name of the Lord." And when they drew it to land they found in it four large mullets. They laid them at the bishop's feet, but he bade them take them to the house of Franciscans in the town. At another time, some poor fishermen, who had been fishing all day at Bramber, without catching anything, saw the welcome figure of the bishop approaching them, and cried out, "My lord, for the love of God, give us thy blessing, for we have toiled all day in vain." Then Richard, out of his overflowing compassion, stretched forth his hand and blessed them ; and, immediately letting down the net, they enclosed a large number of fish.

One more instance of Richard's power, and we have done. Reginald, the mayor of Chichester, one day paid him a visit, and was surprised to find with him a wretched and loathsome cripple. Reginald asked who he was, and was answered that he was a poor boy, whom Richard, before he was a bishop, had found stretched before the porch of the church of Orpington in Kent.

With his wonted compassion, he had taken the poor boy to live with him, and had brought him to his palace, when he quitted his parsonage. The mayor said, "My lord, let him be brought into thy presence, that thou mayst lay hands on him and bless him, and I feel sure that he will recover." This required a further effort than the half-playful blessing of the fisherman, and Richard hesitated. But he bethought him of the merits of St. Edmund, and sent for the cup which had so often touched the lips of his sainted friend. He then blessed the poor boy, and gave him drink out of St. Edmund's cup; and his crooked limbs were made straight, and he was restored to health.

In all these instances, it was the overflowing love of the holy man which moved him to exert himself, in the same way as he gave alms and comforted the sick. And this is the Christian notion of miraculous gifts. They are a certain objective power residing in a Saint, by the special gift of God, and welling out from him, as it were without an effort, by an heroic act of charity.

## CHAPTER VI.

## RICHARD AS A GREAT MAN.

THE character of a Christian bishop has its stern as well as its merciful side; and we have only seen Richard as yet compassionate and patient. But it was principally in his relations with the great men of the earth that he had need of appearing inexorable, and on these we have hardly touched as yet. A multiplicity of business came before him as bishop of Chichester and as baron of the realm; and this brought him in contact with kings and queens, earls and countesses. In this respect, he had a most difficult part to play. It was hard to reconcile the Saint and the great man; and doubtless Richard's hair-shirt pressed more roughly on his limbs, when he had to smile and be agreeable among great company than when he was in the sphere which he loved best, among the poor people of his flock. It would have been hard under any circumstances, but it was especially so in his case; for he had been the first to come before the nobles of the land as the champion of the Church; and now that he was victorious in the contest, and was in point of fact a bishop nominated by the Holy See in the teeth of the royal power, it was hard to do away with old heart-burnings. He had been thoroughly hated by all about the court, and in the face of this feeling he had, at times, to associate with his old opponents. Besides which, between the Church and rapacious and irreligious nobles, perpetual causes of

quarrel were rising up ; sometimes a great man wanted an unworthy relation to be instituted to a living, or else he encroached upon the lands of the Church or oppressed a monastery. And, in this way, Richard was thrown in contact not only with noblemen, but with chartered cities and corporations ; and, in short, with whatever was of the world. It was a hard matter to conciliate the esteem and reverence of all amidst such manifold points of opposition, and yet Richard managed to compass the difficulty. He divided himself, as it were, into two. As a public man, not Grosseteste himself, was a more stern and inexorable defender of the rights of the Church than Richard ; but into his private intercourse with the world, he carried the same generosity and the same meekness and gentleness as with the poor. Not Grosseteste himself was a better type of an Englishman than the generous and open-hearted Richard. The halls of Amberley and of Cakeham were open to the rich and noble, as well as to the poor. The feasts were not so sumptuous as at the great table of the bishop of Lincoln,<sup>1</sup> nor was his conversation so suited to men of the world ; but all his guests, as they went from his gates, felt that they should never cease to love him for his cheerful and dignified courtesy. His kindness of heart, which overflowed in all he did and said, and the graceful dignity of his manner won the hearts of all. Who, indeed, could help loving him ? “ I saw once,” says Bocking, “ a man whom he wished to honour come in to dine with him, and ask for water to wash his hands before dinner.” They, therefore, went together to prepare for dinner ; and when his guest was holding

<sup>1</sup> In mensa refectionis corporalis, dapsilis, copiosus et civilis, hilaris et affabilis. As to Grosseteste. see annals of Lanercost, ap. Ang. Sac.

for him the napkin, according to the usual mark of respect, Richard pulled off his ring as if he wished him to hold it. When he had wiped his hands, and his guest held out the ring to give it back to him, the bishop would not take it back, but put it on his friend's finger, and bade him keep it for his sake, saying that he had another.

As for his enemies, he had a singular mode of dealing with them, which forced them to love him in spite of themselves. One of the courtiers had been heard to say, while Richard was still excluded from his manors by Henry, that he was willing to be hanged if any one would hang the bishop with him ; and yet on this very man Richard conferred many kindnesses, after his manors were restored to him. In the same way he astonished John, the first Fitzalan who was earl of Arundel. The earl had done grievous injury to the Church, and had been excommunicated ; one day, however, he came on business to the bishop, expecting to meet with a very cool reception. Richard seized on this opportunity to try to melt this stubborn heart ; he received him into his house, and suspended the sentence of excommunication for as long as he remained under his roof. He placed him next to himself at dinner, gave him his blessing, and conversed with him affably and cheerfully, dismissing him at last with gifts. The earl was quite puzzled, and went away saying : " Never, in my life, have I seen such a man ; he loves his enemies, and returns good deeds for injuries." Richard afterwards, when John Fitzalan incurred the king's displeasure, used his interest to reconcile them.

It was no wonder that Richard was beloved, when he used such guileless arts as these ; the nobles bowed their heads willingly before this uncompromising champion of the Church with all his severity. Richard had his dis-

ciples among the great men and women of the world. Edmund de Lacy, as we have seen, bred up as he was in the midst of the court, loved him tenderly ; and it appears, incidentally, that the golden cross which Richard wore was the gift of the Earl of Lincoln. Isabella, too, the dowager countess of Arundel,<sup>2</sup> a woman of such strength of character that she ventured to reprove king Henry to his face, loved him, and put herself under his direction. By his advice she never married again, but continued a widow, employing herself in works of charity ; and among other good deeds founded a nunnery at Marham in Norfolk. He brought a blessing upon her house ; and by his intercession, God was pleased to heal a religious widow who lived with her. Young and old loved Richard ; and in this respect, he contrasted with his old friend Grosseteste, who was at feud with every body. Pope and king, the chapter of Lincoln, and the monks of the diocese, secular and regulars, all had differences with him. And yet it was not that Richard had no opportunities of quarrelling ; in the defence of his Church, he was as stern as Grosseteste. The abbot of Fecamp, the countess of Kent, and even the king's brother, Richard of Cornwall, the king of the Romans all fell under his lash, and yet so meek and mild was he in the midst of his unbending assertion of the rights of the Church, that none of them could help loving him.

In one respect alone was Richard inexorable even to

<sup>2</sup> There were two countesses of Arundel called Isabella at once. One was the wife of the last Albini or d'Aubeny, who was earl of Arundel, and daughter of William, earl Warren and Surrey. The other was her sister-in-law, who, by her marriage with John Fitzalan, brought the earldom of Arundel into that family. This latter Isabella was three times married, and therefore the other was the disciple of St. Richard, as appears from Bocking's dedicatory epistle.

sternness, and that was when any one violated the dignity of the priesthood, or any priest polluted his holy office by sin. In one case he had deprived a priest of noble blood of his benefice, and was assailed on all sides by petitions for his re-instalment. "But," says Bocking, "though king and queen, and many great nobles with prelates and bishops earnestly and often begged him to restore the offender to his benefice, he was immovable, and would not yield for all their prayer." To one bishop, who was especially urgent, he answered, "My lord bishop, I commit my authority to thee in this case, at the peril of thy soul, as thou wouldest wish to to have acted at the day of judgment before the Judge of all;" but the bishop would not accept the bargain. On the other hand, a knight had violently put a priest in prison; Richard not only refused to accept a large sum of money as a commutation of penance; but compelled the guilty knight to hang round his neck the block of wood to which he had chained his captive, and thus accoutred, to walk into the court of Lewes, and round the church which belonged to the priest whom he had injured. The same town of Lewes was the scene of another vindication of the rights of the Church, though the guilty parties were of a different class. Some burgesses of Lewes had violently torn a malefactor out of a church in which he had taken sanctuary, and had hanged him. On pain of excommunication, Richard made them dig up the body, which had been buried out of consecrated ground, and bear it on their shoulders to the church out of which they had taken him. Others again, who had aided and abetted, he compelled to do penance in their shirts and drawers, with ropes round their necks, through the streets of Lewes; and he indignantly refused to commute this penance for a pecuniary fine. In this case, however, it is probable that his indignation was



roused as much by compassion for the wretched malefactor as by the injury done to the Church ; for in another case, he extended the work of his mercy to a miserable outcast from society, by the use of the right of sanctuary, which he evidently considered to be a salutary check on the summary justice as well as injustice of the times. A woman about to become a mother was shut up by the king's officers in one of the bishop's prisons under a sentence of death, which was only deferred till after her delivery. He happened to come to the manor where she was imprisoned, and went to visit her. He bade her go and sin no more, and repent of her sins, and pointed out to her a neighbouring church where she might take refuge. And when his seneschal came to him with a long face with the news that she had got off, and that he should have to pay a fine of one hundred shillings for her escape, he said, " what are one hundred shillings to the life of a captive ? Blessed be God who hath freed her."

In all these things, it is evident that Richard's whole life was engaged in making men feel that there was an authority upon earth superior to anything earthly. He knew well that men care but little for an abstraction, and so he brought the Holy Church as a living thing before the eyes of all. Through all the various gradations of society, he made her influence to be felt ; the middle classes as well as the higher, were all drawn within the capacious circle which he traced about them. The importunate cross was held up before the eyes of all, from the king in his palace to the captive in the lowest dungeon of a feudal prison. His labours reached even beyond the Church ; and a Jew whom he had instructed in the faith was baptized by him with his own hands in Westminster Abbey, in the presence of the king, who stood godfather to the new convert.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE LAST DAYS.

THESE were the proper and daily functions of Richard's episcopate, and in them consisted his daily life for eight years. Only a confused view can be given of it from the scantiness of the notices of time and place furnished by his biographer, but we obtain a more distinct notion of him as we approach to the close of his life. The scene and the manner of his labours were then somewhat changed, for in obedience to a commission from the Holy See he set about preaching a new crusade in the year 1252. It was at all times a thankless and a weary task, to urge men to leave their homes to cross the seas on a distant expedition, and mothers and wives often strove to prevent pilgrims from assuming the cross.<sup>1</sup> But in this instance the preaching of the crusade was mixed up with many agitating questions which then began to occupy the public mind in England. It was at this time that the unpopularity of the court of Rome in England was at the highest. The laity and clergy were disgusted at the taxes which were raised on the impoverished country for the support of the crusades and of the war with the emperor, as well as with the number of foreign ecclesiastics who were appointed to benefices in England. In consequence of this feeling, associations had been formed for the des-

<sup>1</sup> Dunham, *Europe in the Middle Ages*, iv. 304.

truction of the property of Roman clerks ; and foreigners holding benefices had been compelled to take refuge in the monasteries. About this time, too, Grosseteste's fiery manifesto was sent to Lyons, so that in fulfilling the papal commission Richard was acting in a spirit the very opposite to that of the violent bishop of Lincoln. It will be seen by and bye that he had views of his own upon the subject of the taxation of the clergy, but he sacrificed all feelings to his obedience to the Holy See, and proceeded zealously in his ungracious task.

It was all very well whilst he proceeded along the coasts of Sussex and Kent, in his mission ; there he was on his own ground. He began in his own cathedral of Chichester, and the very arches, which now look down in their stern strength upon those who worship there, echoed to his voice as he preached the cross. Then he went down towards the coast ; and from the low turf-clad promontory of Selsey, the mother church of his see, along by Cakeham and Ferring, the scene of his patient poverty, and the sea-beaten cliffs of Beachy-head, from village to village, and town to town he went, preaching the cross of Christ. He was a very missionary in this his preaching ; and it was not only externally that he persuaded men to take the cross on their shoulders ; deep in their hearts he impressed it. He represented the crusade as a penance and as the commencement of a change of life to them who had led dissolute and wicked lives. " His aim," says Bocking, " was to bow down the rough necks of the sailors to the yoke of Christ's cross ; he preached of the abominations of sin, and of the punishment of Divine vengeance which follow it. He tried to produce grief and contrition in his hearers, and so he impressed upon them the healthful mark of the cross." The rough pilots of the sea coast, hardened into indifference by a life of

constant peril and toil, and the reckless sailors of the Cinque Ports came to kneel at his feet, and did not fear to confess the long tale of crime, which they had thought too heavy to be unfolded to any one on earth and too terrible to be forgiven in heaven ; but the good bishop gave them such sweet words of comfort that they ventured to tell him all. And when he told them how good St. Louis had suffered in captivity for the sake of the Holy Land, and was even then in Palestine waiting for succour from Europe, and how they should fight for the Lord's sepulchre, and perhaps kneel in the place where His body was laid, and obtain the remission of their sins, the tears ran down their weather-beaten cheeks and the penance seemed to them comparatively light. In this way he proceeded along the coast, even to Canterbury, "the Jerusalem of England," as the friar calls it, "since there rest the precious bodies of the martyred pontiffs Thomas and Alphege, and so many other Saints."

Thus far Richard was labouring among the poor, where he loved to be ; but soon after Easter he was summoned up to a parliament at Westminster, on Wednesday, April 14th, and the king made a proclamation, that the citizens of London were to be there as well as the barons and great men of the realm. And Richard, with Walter de Cantilupe, bishop of Worcester, and the abbot of Westminster, were to preach to this great assembly, to persuade them to take to heart the business of the cross. Richard however found a very different audience under the vaulted roof of Westminster Abbey, from that which he addressed in the parish churches of Sussex, or under the sky, with a rock for his pulpit, near the sea shore. There were the rich citizens of London, who a few years before had wealth enough to buy the crown jewels of the needy king, and who aspired to be called barons ;

and there were, too, the proud nobles of the realm, who had then too much to do at home in opposing the king, to think of going to Palestine. This was a most unpromising audience, and at this time, as any one might see who looked upon them, suspicion was on every countenance, and the hearts of all were evidently steeled against the preacher. However eloquent Richard might be, it was evident that his efforts were all thrown away; the nobleman frowned, and the citizen looked dogged and laid his hand instinctively on the pouch which hung to his girdle. The fact was that they all suspected that this new crusade was but another mode adopted by the king to extort money. Besides which they were very sore with the Holy See, of which the preacher was the representative; so, says Matthew of Paris, few citizens and few Englishmen took up the cross. Richard went on with his ungrateful task after this repulse, and nothing more is heard of him definitely till the feast of St. Edward, January 5th, of the next year.<sup>2</sup> Again he is found at Westminster taking his seat among the nobles of the land; but it was a scene which suited him little, though he took a prominent part in it. Still more stern were the countenances of the barons than they had been the year before, for now was read a mandate from the Holy See granting to the king on the eve of his departure for the Holy Land a tenth of the Church property for three years, and the king's agents argued that not only two years of this tax should be paid at once, as the pope's mandate allowed, but that the third year should be paid in advance. At this announcement the nobles reddened with anger and the prelates looked blank. Then up started Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, in

<sup>2</sup> The dates of these parliaments are taken from Dr. Parry's excellent book "The Parliaments and Councils of England."

great wrath, and spoke in words too characteristic to be omitted. "What is this?" he said, "by our Lady, ye are reckoning on what has never been granted to you. Do ye suppose that we have given our consent to this cursed contribution? Far be from us this bowing of the knee to Baal." And when the bishop elect of Winchester suggested that between the Pope and the king they should be obliged to pay the demand, and that the French had already established a precedent, Grosseteste answered, "So much the more ought we to resist, because the French have yielded, for two acts are enough to constitute a custom. Besides, alas! that it should be so; we see as clear as daylight what has come of the king of France's tyrannical extortion; lest then both the king and we should incur the just judgment of God, I for one freely give my voice against this oppressive contribution." It certainly seems reasonable at first sight, that the clergy should contribute with their wealth to the defence of the Holy Land, for which the laity hazarded their lives; and St. Louis was no tyrant, as Grosseteste might have known, notwithstanding his intemperate words. But on the other hand, the character of Henry was so weak and vacillating that he was hardly fit to be trusted with the money: and his having demanded what the Pope had not allowed him to require, were strong reasons against granting the demand. Besides the churches were oppressed with debt and drained by the continual demands of the court of Rome; the prelates therefore determined to resist the demand, and in the end they put off the consideration of the question.

It would have been better for Grosseteste's fame if his words had been more chastened than they often were towards the Holy See. Notwithstanding his very great qualities, his memory has been mixed up with absurd fables, and

the story of his life has become a mythic embodying of the principle of opposition to the see of St. Peter.<sup>3</sup> Richard did better than Robert Grosseteste; after giving his vote in parliament, he went back to his weary task of preaching the cross, in obedience to the highest authority in Christendom.

It was in this work that Richard died. Parliament was to meet again after Easter, but before that time he had gone to his rest. On the 23rd of April, the third Sunday in Lent,<sup>4</sup> he had got as far as Dover in his progress along the sea-coast, and went to lodge in the hospital of St. Mary, or God's house, in that town. On his arrival, the warden and brethren of the hospital begged of him to consecrate a small church and church-yard in honour of St. Edmund. His face was observed to beam with joy as he assented to their request; and those about him attributed it to his pleasure at consecrating a church in the name of his sainted friend. But it had also, as it afterwards appeared, a further meaning, for he looked upon it as an intimation that his death was at hand. After the consecration was over, he preached to a large

<sup>3</sup> Though much relating to Grosseteste is to be received with suspicion, there seems no reason to doubt that his letter, quoted by Matthew Paris in ann. 1253, is genuine.

<sup>4</sup> The Bollandists, in the notes to Bocking's life, make it to have been the fourth Sunday. But from the Saint's words to Simon of Ferring, it is evident that he died on the Thursday week after the Sunday on which he consecrated the church, not on the next Thursday. And as this day of his death was the Thursday in the fourth week in Lent, the Sunday week before must have been the third Sunday in Lent. In the other life given in the Bollandists his sickness is said to have lasted ten days, which so far agrees with Bocking; but it makes the greater part of these ten days to have preceded the consecration of the church. It has been thought better to follow the friar, whose information is more minute.

concourse of people, and a part of his sermon has been preserved : “ Dearest brethren,” he said, “ I pray you to praise and bless the Lord with me in that He has given us grace to be present at this dedication, to His honour, and that of our holy father Edmund. For this I have longed ever since I was consecrated a bishop ; this has ever been my most earnest prayer, that before my life’s end, I might consecrate at least one church to his honour. Wherefore with my whole heart I give thanks to God, who hath not defrauded me of the desire of my soul. And now, dearest brethren, I know that I must shortly put off this my tabernacle, in which last struggle, I pray you to give me the help of your prayers.” After he had finished the celebration of mass, and given the benediction, the bishop returned to the hospital. “ When, lo !” continues his biographer, “ there comes to him one of his household whom he loved, asking his leave to go to visit a church to which he had been appointed. But the bishop would not give him leave, and said, ‘ if thou leavest me now, a time will come, and that before thy return, when thou wouldest not be absent from my side, for the whole church.’ ” He felt a presentiment that his last hour was at hand, though as yet no sickness had shewn itself. On the Monday, he felt himself unwell, but he would not give in to the feeling ; he therefore rose as usual, and entering his oratory began to say the office. But he had not been there long, when his limbs sunk under him, and he fell prostrate on the floor. The fever was even then upon him, and he was carried to his bed from which he never rose. He daily grew worse and felt more and more certain that he was to die. When the physicians were consulting upon his disease, he said, “ Ye need not trouble yourselves to form a judgment on my disease ; death is already at the door and it has passed its judg-



ment upon me that I must depart from this earthly tabernacle, and the spirit must go to Him who gave it."

"Seeing, then," continues his biographer, "that the time in which he was to be called from this world was at hand, he called about him some of his dearest friends, and informed them that his end was approaching. He gave directions for his funeral to William, his chaplain and intimate friend, taking care that his household should not perceive and be alarmed by his preparations. He then made a general confession of his life, and the last Sacraments were administered to him.

He soon became so weak, and his voice so low, that he could hardly be heard; yet every broken word that could be gathered showed how he kept his quiet, cheerful spirit to the last. His faithful Simon of Ferring, who was always at his bedside, once said to him, "My lord, the celebration of the Lord's Passion is at hand, and as thou art partaker of His pains, so by His grace shalt thou be of His consolation." Richard's countenance brightened when this was said to him, and he repeated in a low tone: "I was glad when they said unto me, 'we will go into the house of the Lord.'" And then turning round on his pillow, he fixed his eyes on Simon, and said "On the Friday I shall be at a great banquet;" and seeing that Simon could not catch the first words from the weakness of his voice, he said, "Do not you understand me? Is not to-day Wednesday?" Simon answered, "Yes, my lord." And then he added, "I do not mean that I shall go to the enjoyment of that banquet on Thursday, but the next Thursday after that." Simon did not understand him, but he found out afterwards what the broken words of his friend meant.

On another day he was ordered to take some food in

order to support his failing strength. One of his attendants said to him, "My lord, thy supper is but scanty to-day, it consists but of one dish, of which I hope thou wilt eat heartily." Richard said, "It is enough ; one dish alone is wanted at that supper." He then added, "Know you what I mean ? This is that of which St. Philip said to our Lord ; 'shew us the Father, and it is enough for us.' May the Lord give me that dish for my supper." A short time before he died, he asked for a crucifix, and receiving it with joy, he kissed the marks of the five wounds, and said, "Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesu Christ, for all the benefits which Thou hast given me, for the pains and insults which Thou hast borne for me ; so great were they, that that mournful cry suited Thee right well, 'there is no grief like unto my grief.'" His voice grew weaker and weaker, but his faculties were unimpaired, and he still managed to speak, though in broken accents to those about him. When his end was drawing nigh, he said, "Lay this putrid carcass on the ground." So when they had laid his suffering frame on the floor, he repeated, over and over again, "Lord, into thine hands I commend my spirit." He had recourse to the intercession of the blessed Virgin, in his last agony, and said, "Mary, mother of grace, mother of mercy, do thou protect me from the enemy, and receive me in the hour of death." It was at midnight, that, with many of the faithful, both laymen and ecclesiastics standing about him, assembled to witness the death of the righteous, that "blessed father Richard gave up his soul into the hands of his Creator."

The last thoughts which he gave to earthly matters were directed to his friends and to his cathedral. In his will, which is still extant, he distributes his books among

various religious houses, principally of the two Orders of friars. He remembers all his servants, his old friend Simon of Ferring, and his brother; and especially he leaves twenty-one marks as a marriage portion to his sister's daughter. To the bishop of Norwich,<sup>5</sup> who it appears from a slight notice in his life was his intimate friend, he left a signet-ring. To the building fund of his cathedral, he left a large sum of money. To his cathedral also he bequeathed his body "to be buried," he says, "in the nave near the altar of the blessed Edmund Confessor, close to the pillar."

His love for St. Edmund, the key-note of his life, was thus again struck on his death-bed, and now prolonged after his death. His bowels were buried in the church which he had consecrated, but his body was dressed in his pontifical garments, and placed on a bier, and carried to Chichester. The bells of the churches sounded, and the ecclesiastics issued forth in procession, as the solemn funeral approached a village, a town, or a monastery. Tears and lamentations marked its progress, and those thought themselves happy who could approach near enough to touch his sacred body; and when at length, his remains were brought into his cathedral the plaintive chaunts of the service were broken by lamentations. He was buried where he desired, near St. Edmund's altar, as it is described, on the north side of the church. His body does not, however, rest there now. There is a small chantry in a space opening into the south transept of Chichester cathedral, and in it a mutilated tomb with a recumbent figure of a bishop in his pontifical robes. It is beneath that tomb that St.

<sup>5</sup> This Bishop of Norwich is, by mistake, called John, in the copy of the will published in Dallaway's "Sussex."

Richard lies in his saintly rest. Thither his body was translated, probably, after he had been canonized by Urban IV. in the year 1262, principally at the instance of John,<sup>6</sup> bishop of Winchester, in consequence of the many miracles wrought by his intercession.

May his prayers avail for all who in these times of perplexity know not where to find rest for their souls, and bring them to the only haven where peace is to be found in this wretched world. May they avail for those who are now piously repairing his tomb, and for all connected with that cathedral, that they may be led to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, and to the one fold which He has established upon earth.

---

<sup>6</sup> This bishop is called John of Guernsey by Godwin. Is not this a mistake for Joannes Gervasii?

LIVES  
OF  
THE ENGLISH SAINTS.

---

St. Waltheof.  
St. Robert.

---

MANSUETI HEREDITABUNT TERRAM, ET DELECTABUNTUR IN  
MULTITUDINE PACIS.

LONDON:  
JAMES TOOVEY, 192, PICCADILLY.

---

1845.

LONDON :  
Printed by S. & J. BENTLEY, WILSON, and FLEY,  
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

LIVES OF

St. Waltheof

AND

St. Robert of Newminster.

---

INTRODUCTION.

It may have been observed that hitherto there have been comparatively few miracles in the Lives of Cistercian Saints. There even seems to be a dislike to looking out for miracles, as arguing a want of faith. Thus St. Aelred, in a passage already referred to, says, "There is also another sort of curiosity, which is the worst, by which, however, those alone are attacked who are conscious within themselves of great virtues, I mean the experimenting on one's own sanctity by the exhibition of miracles, which is tempting God. And if a man consent to this very wicked vice and is disappointed, his anguish of soul will lead him into the straits of despair, or the sacrilege of blasphemy."<sup>1</sup> Again, that is a significant story told of the successor of St. Bernard, at Clairvaux, that he begged of the saint to work no more miracles, as the concourse of people at his tomb distracted the devotion of the monks. In the two lives, however, which close the series of Cistercian Saints in England, there is a marked difference in this respect; both abound in that class of stories commonly called legends. Many of these are so well fitted to illustrate

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Car. 2. 24.

certain principles which should be borne in mind in considering mediæval miracles, that they deserve some attention. Not that anything here said is intended to *prove* that the stories of miracles said to be wrought in the middle ages, are true. Men will always believe or disbelieve their truth, in proportion as they are disposed to admit or reject the antecedent probability of the existence of a perpetual church endowed with unfailing divine powers. And the reason of this is plain. Ecclesiastical miracles presuppose the Catholic faith just as Scripture miracles, and Scripture itself presuppose the existence of God. Men, therefore, who disbelieve the faith, will of course disbelieve the story of the miracles, which, if it is not appealed to as a proof of the faith, at least takes it for granted. For instance, the real reason for rejecting the account of the vision which appeared to St. Waltheof in the Holy Eucharist, must be disbelief of the Catholic doctrine. Without, however, entering on so wide a subject, it will be enough to examine, as it were, the phenomena of the miracles themselves, and to see what can be made out as to their probable truth or falsehood.

First, then, no one can read the legends of the middle ages without observing their highly poetical character. They form in themselves a vast literature of every country in Europe, many of them containing the only contemporary history of the period at which they were written, and many having a beauty and a freshness, which has been observed by many who disbelieved them. Besides which, they are the exponents of a well-defined idea, and are formed on a religious type which is clear enough to those who talk most loudly against them. The notion of a saint which they embody is a very definite one, and the writers evidently know what they are



talking about. It seems most unphilosophical to suppose that such writers were men who knowingly wrote to deceive ; the vast volumes of the Bollandists, illustrated as they are with such astonishing historical and antiquarian learning, would be most extraordinary compositions if this were the case. And, in fact, there are now comparatively few who take this view of the legends of saints. They are generally now opposed on the ground of their poetical character, and not as being intentional fabrications. In fact, the two objections are incompatible ; no one would dream of calling a poet dishonest, because his narrative is fictitious. If he believes the stories on which he writes, he may be called superstitious, but that is a very different indictment. To call a tale poetical is, however, by no means to say that it is true ; on the contrary, this is the very ground on which legends are commonly said to be false. They are thought to be the natural product of the Christian religion acting upon the vigorous imagination of a youthful people ; they are the offspring of the human mind in one stage of its progress, and they come out of it as the acorn out of the oak, and the flower out of the plant. In other words, legends of saints are the creations of the mind of man in the same sense as the Hindoo or Greek mythology ; Christianity, indeed, being a purer religion, has substituted some holy virgin as a guardian for the sacred well, instead of the Grecian Naid, but one being is as much a fiction as the other. And the legends themselves are a proof of this ; they are observed to vary in character according to the country which gave them birth. The legends of the sandy Thebais, with their repose and Eastern gravity, contrast strongly with the wild stories of western hermits, which are the genuine products of the forest and the cavern by the sea shore. Celtic legends also have a

savage air peculiar to themselves, with their tales of serpents and monsters, reminding the reader strongly that St. Michael has just succeeded to the holy isles of the Druids ; while Saxon stories are of a homely and domestic cast. All these legends, the argument proceeds, show their peculiar origin by their variety, just as the nature of the soil is betrayed by the plants which grow upon it. These legends, therefore, are of the earth, and we need rise no higher for their origin. Secondly, to bring the matter nearer to our subject, not only do these considerations account for the existence of legendary literature, but they account for visions and prodigies of all sorts. The same love of the marvellous which produces fairy tales and ghost stories, will also make the peasant fancy that he sees the elves dancing by moonlight on the mountain-side ; and by the same law of our minds, the vivid imagination of a good man, acted upon by his devotion, might produce on his mind a strong impression which might take the shape of a vision. In the case of St. Waltheof, for instance, it may be observed that the visions which he saw occurred always on the feast-days and holy times of the church. Now it may be that a highwrought state of mind, worked upon by long and exciting services, produced the vision, as the events of a day produce a dream.

This is the way in which men argue, and it is not necessary just now to inquire how far the fact on which the argument is grounded, is true. Few would doubt that many legends of the lives of Saints are strongly tinged by popular devotion, or it may be by superstition. How, indeed, could it be otherwise ? When it is known that many islands on the savage coast of Brittany, for instance, were in a half heathen state, and required missionaries in the seventeenth century, can

they be supposed to have been less benighted in the tenth? It may, therefore, very safely be allowed that many legends of the middle ages are but a reflection of the truth rather than the truth itself. Some of them are mere myths, and belong to the same class as the beautiful stories of the Saintgrail, and of king Authur's knights. And indeed this is the way in which most authors now regard them. The Bollandists are by no means sparing of such epithets as *ineptæ* and *ridiculæ*, applied to many legends which they have published. Time has gone on, and in its course men are altered too; and they can no longer receive indiscriminately what the faith of their ancestors fed upon. We must be men, it is said, and criticism and historic truth must take the place of simple belief.

This is not, however, what we would now dwell upon: our present object is rather to point out that with all the drawbacks that are to be made on the score of the superstition pervading a portion of ancient lives of Saints, the argument drawn out above does not cut the ground from under medieval miracles and visions in general, as it pretends to do. It is quite true that stories of miracles partake of the character of an imaginative age, and are tinged by the character of particular nations, yet this is no reason for supposing them to be untrue, for individuals partake of the tone of the age and country in which they live, and it is out of the characters of His saints that God produces the wonders which He operates in His church. The human side of events is by no means incompatible with the divine. The inspiration which puts into the heart of a Saint to work a miracle, by no means excludes his will and his temper; his angelic charity is employed in healing the sick miraculously, as in dressing their wounds or in

soothing their sorrows. The undaunted energy, and even the roughness and quaintness of his character, may come out in the midst of the supernatural power imparted to him.

And with respect to visions in particular, there seems no reason why the devotion of a saint should not in a certain sense produce a vision, just as grace implies our habits, and predestination our efforts. And yet, though the intense contemplation of one who is pure in heart may pierce through the veil and see the saints and angels before the throne, this does not exclude the agency of God, whose workmanship we are, though we work out our own salvation. It is a wide-spread error by which men suppose that when they have classified all that they know of a subject, they have got to the bottom of the whole matter, and have a right to exclude whatever does not necessarily come within their system, even though it may not be incompatible with it. They think that they have discovered all that is to be known, when they have but found out the formal cause, that is, when they have analyzed their own idea, forgetting that the real cause still remains as far off from them as ever. Some philosophers have argued, that because the idea of God in the human mind is the creation of the soul of man, imagining to itself the supreme good, therefore God Himself is nothing more than the ideal standard of good dwelling naturally within us. But such men forget that, although the thought of God may come into the heart of man by a natural process, this is not incompatible with the fact of His existence as our Everlasting Creator and Master. And in like manner visions might be real, that is come from God, though they were ever so much the effect of the intense devotion of the Saint.

And to carry these remarks further, in matters

of physical science it is often said that men now-a-days have no superstitious views of such phenomena as earthquakes, eclipses, and thunder, because their causes have been discovered. Now it may or may not be superstitious to be afraid of thunder, but to say that it is caused by electricity removes none of those reasons for fear which affected men in the dark ages. What is meant by a law is only the human way of viewing in succession, what to Almighty God, and it may be even to the angels, is one and undivided. So it is quite true that "the glorious God maketh the thunder," though it is also true that electricity is the cause of it, and that it proceeds on a natural law. So also the dark ages might be right in ascribing certain extraordinary events to divine agency, even though men had discovered, which they have not, the psychological law on which such effects are produced. They might be connected with the imaginativeness of the human heart, for imagination raised by Christianity above its natural powers becomes intense devotion.

To go to another branch of the same subject, it is often said that what was called diabolical possession was only a natural disease called epilepsy, and therefore had nothing to do with devils. But evil spirits might have power over the body, and might always act in a particular way, so as to constitute a law. Or else they might bring to pass, in a supernatural way, effects which also happen from natural causes, so that exorcism may be a supernatural power, even though natural means can in time remove what may be done miraculously in an instant. Again, in the present day, strange effects of mind over matter have been discovered, and in some cases mesmerism seems to make an approach to what would formerly have been ascribed

and rightly to supernatural causes. But this, so far from telling against medieval miracles, only proves that human souls and bodies possess mysterious powers on which the Holy Spirit may have deigned to work, and that things are possible which men have long denied on the score of their impossibility. Nay, supposing that Satan could thus in certain false systems of religion imitate some Christian miracles by signs and wonders, it would throw no discredit upon them. Natural philosophers have been said to draw down lightning from heaven and to make diamonds, but they do not make the slightest approach to the power of God, nor bridge over the infinite gulf which divides causation from creation.

It appears, then, that to talk of the power of imagination is nothing to the purpose, if it is meant to show that such visions as those with which St. Waltheof was favoured did not really come from heaven. Imagination, translated into the language of the Church, means devotion ; and no one can tell how far Almighty God may have made use of the Saint's own devotion in framing the vision before the eyes of his soul. And what has been said on similar subjects by great writers in the Church falls in with this notion of the influence of the soul in such matters. St. Augustine discusses whether the cloven tongues of fire, seen on the first Whitsunday, were seen in the spirit within, as though they were without, or really without before the eyes of the flesh. In another place, he touches upon "the power of the soul in changing and influencing bodily matter,"<sup>2</sup> though, at the same time, he says, that it cannot be called the creator of the body, who is God alone. So also St. Thomas discusses the very case

<sup>2</sup> St. Aug. de Trin. 3. 8.

which, as will be seen, happened to St. Waltheof, of a child appearing at the time of the elevation of the Host. He thus determines that what was there seen was not the body of our Lord, but that an effect was produced upon the eyes of the Saint, "as though it were seen externally." "And yet," he continues, "this had nothing to do with deception, as in the case of magic charms, for such an appearance is formed by divine influence on the eye to figure a truth—viz., to show that the body of the Lord is really under the Sacrament; as also Christ, without deception, appeared to the disciples going to Emmaus."<sup>3</sup> Again, in an instance which brings us close to St. Robert of Newminster, St. Godric, who does not at first seem likely to reason on what he saw, is recorded to have said, after seeing a vision of a departed soul, that he saw not the soul itself, for it was invisible, but that what he saw was a form which signified its presence.

And if it be asked, why should these visions be real, and alleged appearances of false gods and of beings created by superstition be untrue?—the answer is, that, as has been said before, the visions in the lives of Saints presuppose the truth of the Catholic faith, and are real because the faith is true. We believe Christian visions to be real because Christianity is real, and the portents of heathen mythology are false because they are part of a false religion. And here, as in many other respects, the analogy between the natural and the spiritual sight is perfect; for all our senses, and sight among the rest, require it to be taken for granted that the sensations which we feel are produced by an object without us; and philosophers have been found who reason very plausibly, that all that we see and touch is merely our-

<sup>3</sup> Summa Theol. 3. qu. 76, 8.

selves touching and feeling, just as faithless men argue that the visions of the Saints are mere creations of their own minds. Substance is taken for granted in our bodily vision, as the faith is presupposed in supernatural visions.

And in distinguishing what are most commonly called legends from what is historical in the lives of Saints, it should be borne in mind, that though the prevalence of a certain tone, which may be called poetical or romantic, does not throw discredit on miracles in general ; yet it is quite true that, in many particular instances, the strange stories in medieval narratives are strongly tinged by the spirit of the age, call it poetic, superstitious, or faithful, as you will. The proof of it is, that a love of the marvellous evidently affects the narratives of historians as well as hagiologists ; and this both makes it likely that the same tone should appear in accounts of what is confessedly supernatural, and also shows that truth and falsehood may be blended together without destroying each other. In the grave chronicles of the age, most of them proceeding from the lonely cell of some religious man, accounts of marvellous portents, of bright colours and strange figures seen in the sun and moon, are mingled with just as much of the news of the outer world, of the victories and defeats of kings, as was drifted into the monastery. If it were not for the undeniably life-like energy of the barons and kings who make their appearance, the reader would be tempted to put down the whole for a production of the vivid fancy of some solitary monk, so much does the whole scene savour of the romantic. Sometimes the list of portents reminds us of the marvels which appear in the pages of Livy. Even the shrewd William of Newbridge, though by no means



without his tinge of private judgment, is overcome by his love of the marvellous, and some accounts very like fairy tales appear in the midst of his facts. As a specimen of his narrations, in one place, among many other marvels, it is said that near Winchester some quarrymen found embedded in stone a live toad, with a gold chain and collar round his neck. In the same way, at a time when men were not given to patient investigation on any point, it is not wonderful that the lives of Saints should present manifold exaggerations, and that the convent traditions should in some cases grow, like any other narratives. The objections commonly urged that man is liable to error, and that inspiration alone is infallible, are in place here, however senseless they may be when they would sap the foundations of all history, by rejecting any amount of evidence. There is a good substratum of truth in the medieval lives of Saints, which will stand the attack of any philosophy which would reduce them to the state of myths ; while at the same time the busy, romantic element of the human heart has naturally exercised itself on Christian Saints as it did on the champions of Christendom in the Holy Land. Evidence, internal and external, must be the criterion here, as in every other kind of history.

These remarks are the more apposite, because there are instances in Josceline's life of St. Waltheof which will illustrate what is meant. One of them is as follows: on a certain day, when one of the canons of Kirkham was celebrating mass in the presence of St. Waltheof, a spider fell into the sacred chalice about the time that the words *Agnus Dei* are sung ; the celebrant, not knowing what to do, managed to attract St. Waltheof's attention, and asked him what course ought to be taken. He could not drink the contents of the chalice, because the

spider was a poisonous insect, and he could not take it out for fear of profanation. St. Waltheof, making a short prayer and signing the chalice with the cross, bade the canon boldly drink, in the Lord's name. Then Josceline, after detailing his admiration that the canon received no hurt, goes on to say : " When dinner was over and the canons were sitting in the cloister, the priest who had celebrated mass sat rubbing his finger, and after a short time a lump appeared on it, and lo ! the spider, breaking the skin, came out alive, to the wonder of all who were sitting round, and by the command of the prior was committed to the flames." Now there is no reason to doubt that the spider did fall into the chalice, and that the canon felt the difficulty and drank its contents, for spiders were then believed to be poisonous, As for the story of the reappearance of the insect, as the whole goes on the assumption that spiders are poisonous and that there was a miracle in the case, it may fairly be concluded to be an excrescence on the original story, and that it had been appended to it in conventual tradition, just as any other narrative "*vires acquirit eundo.*" It, however, no more implies fraud, than the addition of this gold chain and collar to the neck of the unfortunate toad, which, doubtless, was found in the quarry near Winchester. Many more instances might be taken from this source, but enough has been said to show how truth and fiction may lie together, blended in the same narrative. If it be impossible to separate them, that is a reason either for neglecting the whole, or for receiving the whole. Religious minds would probably take the latter alternative, not thinking it after all so very great a misfortune to believe a few miracles too much. They would rather venture a little than lose one record of God's dealings with his Saints. However, we do not believe it to

be in all cases impossible to make the separation. In the present instance, some attempt has been made to do so. Josceline, the monk of Furness, who is the author of the life in the Bollandists, wrote about sixty years after the death of St. Waltheof. He professes to draw his narrative from some aged monks of the abbey of Melrose. It seemed therefore lawful to give as much of his narrative as would be interesting, without relating every circumstance, which it contains.<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, it will be well to see in what light such visions and miracles as are here related are considered by spiritual writers in the Catholic Church, that it may be seen how far they are from laying stress upon them, though they will not faithlessly set limits to God's grace in His dealings with His saints. "There are some," says an author whom most men would call foolishly credulous,<sup>5</sup> "whom the devil deceives ; but there are others, too, who are deceived by the weakness of their imagination, fancying that they see and hear extraordinary objects and voices, though in effect they see and hear nothing. There are some also who not only are deceived by the devil, or by themselves, but seek to deceive others by voluntary and diabolical wickedness. So we repeat what we have said ; we must be on our guard, not easily to put faith in extraordinary things. Spiritual directors should take care to guide souls put under them in the ways of pure faith, which is the immediate union of the soul with God. This is the

<sup>4</sup> The precise date of his work cannot now be easily ascertained. It appears that he began it at the request of Patrick, Abbot of Melrose, and finished it after his death. Patrick succeeded William as Abbot in 1206, and died the year after. Josceline, therefore, probably finished his work shortly after 1207.

<sup>5</sup> Boudon, *L'Amour de Dieu seul ; discours préliminaire*.

teaching of the great doctor of mystical theology, the blessed John of the Cross ; he gives it as a rule in his books, that such things as visions and revelations should be left to the judgment of God, and that we should remain in quiet faith, without dwelling upon them. This teaching shields us from all illusions of the devil ; for by resting in pure faith, a man cannot err. He walks by a sure path, and the light which guides him is infallible ; besides which, since these unmerited graces which God gives us, such as visions and revelations, come externally to us, and are independent of us, we therefore are safe in not examining them. I do not mean that directors should not make use of such marks as holy doctors have given us to discern the true Spirit of God in such extraordinary things from the evil spirit ; but I mean that, after all, we must suspend our judgment, and lay no great stress on such things, and lean entirely on faith. With respect to those persons who are the subjects of such extraordinary occurrences, they should not let their minds dwell upon them at all, but leave them to the judgment of God, whatever value they may have in His sight. Thus, if they are the work of the devil, he will be confounded ; if they come from the Holy Spirit, He will increase His blessings."

LIFE OF

St. Waltheof.

---

THE lives of the Saints of the middle ages are like the ruins of their own monasteries, lovely and melancholy fragments, which are but indications of a beauty which has passed away from the earth. Not indeed as though the Church were dead, and there were no Saints now in Christendom, but a Saint of the nineteenth century will never be precisely like one of the twelfth. The beautiful infancy and youth of Christianity are past, and even Saints may partake something of the acuteness and activity of the age with which they have to contend. If Melrose could be roofed afresh, and the vaulted ceiling restored, the painted glass replaced in the east oriel, and the niches filled again, it would certainly not be a facsimile of the Melrose of six hundred years ago. But the building would not be so unlike its predecessor as the new members would differ from their brethren of old, though they wore the same habit and kept the same rule. But it is wrong to mourn over what must be; and perhaps the new brethren would in some respects surpass the old. So we must just take Melrose as it is, a beautiful ruin; and we will try to write the life of its holy Abbot Waltheof, imperfect as the attempt must be. We will do our best to put into shape the scanty records left by brother Josceline, just as a man standing on the Eildon hill on an autumn evening would fill up the outline formed against the glowing sky by the ruined abbey.

*How Waltheof lived in the World.*

There are some persons who, from their birth, appear destined to take part in the roughest scenes of the world's politics, and to this class Waltheof seemed to belong. He was apparently born to inherit the strongest prejudices, and to be placed amidst conflicting interests, in which he was unavoidably to take his part. He was of one of the most illustrious families of England, descended from the old kings and earls of Northumbria, from Ida, the bearer of flame, and from Siward, who had defeated the tyrant Macbeth, and set Malcolm Canmore on the throne. His grandfather, whose name he bore, was that Waltheof whom the Conqueror had first, as he thought, won to himself, by bestowing on him the hand of his niece Judith, but whom he had afterwards ruthlessly beheaded at Winchester. His body was taken to the Abbey of Croyland, where the affectionate remembrance of the poor Saxon canonized the victim of the Conqueror's revenge, and pilgrims often knelt at the tomb of the English martyr. The daughter of this Waltheof, Matilda, was given in marriage to Simon of St. Liz, a Norman noble, as if to obliterate the remembrance of her Saxon blood; and of this union were born two children, Simon and Waltheof. Not long after their birth, their father incurred the displeasure of Henry I., and he assumed the cross and went to the Holy Land. He left England, never to return; news soon came to his wife that she was a widow, for her husband had perished as a good soldier of the Cross in Palestine. Matilda was still young when this happened, and her cousin, king Henry, afterwards gave her in marriage to David of Scotland, and with her bestowed on him the possessions of her first husband. When

David inherited the throne of Scotland, his step-sons followed him, and were brought up in the palace of Dumfermline with his own children.

The course of Waltheof's life seemed thus to be marked out for him : he was to be a staunch defender of the Saxon line, and a hater of the Normans, who had slain his grandfather and caused the exile of his father ; and he was to be a staunch partisan of the succession of the empress Matilda. But there are men who apparently come across their destiny—some for good, and others for bad—and of these was Waltheof. It was evident, however, from his infancy, that he was not made for the world which was moving around him. Their mother, Matilda, used to smile at the contrast between her two boys, when they were mere children, playing at her feet. While Simon, the elder, the future earl and warrior, was building castles of wood and charging, at a mock tournament, astride on a cane, Waltheof would be raising churches of sticks and pebbles, making the sign of the Cross like a priest, and imitating the chants which he had heard in church. As he advanced in years he seemed hardly to change, so naturally and evenly did his character grow in strength and beauty, without losing its childlike freshness. It was as, says the Scripture, the righteous man blossoming as the lily. When he came to David's court, he showed the same purity and the same unearthly character ; and so little did he seem to belong to the scenes which were passing about him, that the nobles of Scotland did not know what to make of him ; and he puzzled them the more, from the striking difference between him and his two companions, Prince Henry and Aelred. The high-spirited Henry was an indefatigable hunter, and marked out for a soldier from his birth ; and even Aelred, who

from his bookish propensities might be classified with Waltheof, still showed some marked differences from his friend : he was more easily understood, from his frank and sociable temper. But Waltheof, without any appearance of moroseness, was fond of solitude ; he had but few friends, while Aelred had many. Again, Aelred was very cheerful, and took interest in all about him ; but Waltheof might have seemed apathetic. Though none could look on his bright countenance and think him gloomy, yet it was evident that the scenes which passed around him affected him but little : he was an unworldly character, and such always are incomprehensible to men of the world. King David alone saw through his step-son ; he used to take Waltheof with him into the noble forests which surrounded Dumfermline to hunt the wild deer ; and would give him his bow to carry, in order to keep him near himself. But the young lord soon grew weary of the chase, and giving up the care of the king's bow to some one else, he used to plunge deep into the woods ; and finding a level spot of green sward under the shade of some broad oak, he would read a book or kneel down to pray. One day David, who used to wonder at his periodical disappearance, came upon him in his retirement, and though the whole chase swept rapidly past him, David's quick eye had time to spy him out in his hiding place ; and when he came home, he said to his queen, " That son of thine is not of our stamp ; he is nothing to the world, nor the world to him ; depend upon it, he will either die young, or else fly away to the cloister."

The nobles about the court, however, did not take this view, and Waltheof still remained a mystery to them. They even made experiments upon him, as philosophers



would on some strange phenomenon. As far as they durst, by covert insinuations, they put evil before him, but his imperturbable simplicity baffled them. Waltheof probably did not know himself any more than they. It often happens that those whom God is leading on to perfection, are unconscious of the end to which they are tending. Those about them often think them incapable of anything very great, and they themselves have often not made up their mind what course of life is to be theirs. The notion of choice does not come before them, till something external forces them to election, and they choose at once the better part. So in the case of Waltheof, an event occurred which opened the eyes of all parties, both his own and those of the nobles, who were looking on to see how this would end. A young and noble lady fell in love with Waltheof, and the courtiers used with delight to watch them speaking together, hoping that at last the lord Waltheof was becoming like his neighbours, and was human after all. Soon after, some one spied glittering on Waltheof's finger a gold ring with a sparkling gem, which the lady had given him. The news soon spread that he was in a fair way of being a confessed lover; there was joy in the gay circles of the court that day, for they thought that Waltheof had fallen from his high estate, and had thus become like an ordinary mortal. They were however mistaken, for when this report reached him, it opened his eyes at once to his situation. He must either make up his mind to marry or to go into religion. The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light, and they taught Waltheof a lesson, that such attachments are dangerous. There can be no half measures, and the crucifixion must be complete.

So Waltheof took the shining jewel off his finger and threw it into the fire. From that moment, he looked upon himself as destined for the priesthood.

## *2. How Waltheof quitted the World.*

He was now considered as certain of a bishoprick either in England or Scotland ; and when the king of Scotland was his step-father, and the king of England his mother's cousin, it was no unreasonable conjecture. Waltheof, had, however, by no means the same views for himself ; his only wish was to serve God in the lowest station in his church. While he was revolving these thoughts in his mind, Aelred announced his intention of becoming a monk and of quitting Scotland. It seemed much less likely that the gay and open-hearted Aelred should be the first to go, but so it was ;<sup>6</sup> and Waltheof must have felt very solitary, when the only friend who understood his feelings and character had gone into religion and had left him in the world. He was not one who could make new friends in a day, and he had still some time to remain in solitude after Aelred had left him. He found more external obstacles than Aelred had met with, in his way from the world to the cloister. He was an important political personage ; and in times when the north of England was a debateable ground, it was of the utmost consequence to put the great sees into the hands of friendly churchmen, as not long after Henry II. saw when he created the bishoprick of Carlisle to counteract the see of Glasgow. Waltheof,

<sup>6</sup> Waltheof did not leave Scotland till his brother was an earl, *i. e.* probably not till Stephen's reign.

as David's step-son, would have been a more respectable personage to fill St. Cuthbert's chair than William Comyn, who was put in by Matilda's party. He was not therefore his own master. His brother Simon, too, whose warlike propensities made him look upon his brother's love for the cloister as fanaticism, had early in Stephen's reign become earl of Northampton;<sup>7</sup> and he as well as king David opposed Waltheof's wish. At length he stole away from David's court, and took refuge in Yorkshire, at a priory of Austin canons, dedicated to St. Oswald, one of the ancestors of his family. Here Waltheof hoped that the world would forget him. "Here," says brother Josceline, "he determined to lie hid and die, as, says the blessed Job, in his little nest; and to grow up noiselessly as a palm-tree, hidden from the provoking of all men in the secret place of God's countenance, forgotten by all his kith and kin, like a useless vessel flung aside, like a dead man in the hearts of his friends." Such was Waltheof's wish. "But the Lord of all," continues Josceline, "had decreed far otherwise." First of all, he was made sacristan of St. Oswald's, and then the canons of Kirkham chose him for their prior. And here at last he seemed to have obtained the rest for which his soul longed; and indeed many men might envy him the place in which his lot was cast. It was in a beautiful valley in Yorkshire, not far from the spot where the waters of the Rye, after passing under the walls of the abbey of Rievaulx, joined the broader stream of the Derwent. He was therefore now a near neighbour to Aelred; the abbey and the priory had a common founder, and their posses-

<sup>7</sup> v. Knyghton ap. Twysden, 2386, and Brompton, 1030. Brompton says, earl of Huntingdon, p. 975, which he was not till afterwards, as appears from John of Hexham, p. 258.

sions touched each other, and the monks had frequent intercourse with the canons. Among their visitors at some time or other was certainly Aelred, for he mentions Kirkham, and calls it a most lovely spot. His friends in Scotland evidently bore no ill-will to him for his flight from them, for his half-brother, prince Henry, loved Kirkham for its prior's sake, and bestowed many lands upon it. His canons too loved Waltheof for all his virtues, but specially for his humility ; for he did not rule over them with a high hand, but treated them as brethren.

He might have quitted them, if he had pleased, for a much higher station. In 1140, Thurstan, archbishop of York, died, and there were great deliberations in the court of Westminster. The question was, who would make a respectable archbishop, and at the same time a good partisan of king Stephen. From Waltheof's noble birth and reputation for sanctity, he would have been an obvious person to fix upon ; and though, from his connection with king David, he was not at first sight likely to fulfil Stephen's conditions, yet it seems that his brother Simon had taken the side of the king against Matilda, so that there were hopes that he might follow his example. Many nobles urged Stephen to appoint him, but the king was afraid of him. With all Waltheof's sweetness and humility, there was a certain unmanageable element in his character which did not suit Stephen. It is a dangerous experiment to place on an episcopal throne a man who could neither be bribed nor frightened. In fact, what could Waltheof be bribed with ? He had already given up everything on earth. He had no earthly wishes ; so what could be done with such a man ? Again, if he did wish for anything, it was to suffer humiliation with his Lord ; force, therefore, would have been equally unavailing. So,

on the whole, king Stephen thought that Waltheof was not the man to be archbishop of York. All this while the prior of Kirkham was very quietly in the wilds of Yorkshire, utterly ignorant that he was the subject of grave deliberation in high places, till one day he received intimation that the puissant earl of Albemarle<sup>8</sup> had arrived at Kirkham, and wished to see him. After some conversation, the noble earl said, "How long dost thou mean to bring dishonour on our house, by burying thyself in this dungeon of a cloister? Why not show thyself in public oftener? If thou wouldest but take the trouble to gain the favour of the king and his counsellors by gifts and promises, thou wouldest win any bishoprick thou mightest affect. If thou wilt but promise to give me the township of Shirburn, to be held by me during my lifetime, I will undertake to get thee the archbishoprick of York." His lordship of Albemarle certainly knew very little with what sort of man he had to deal; he was therefore, probably, not a little surprised to see the pale cheek of the gentle monk suffused with red, and his eye kindle for a moment with something like anger. It however passed away as quickly as it came; and Waltheof calmly said, "Be thou quite sure that thou wilt never see me seated in a bishop's throne, nor thyself in possession of the township of Shirburn."

It was not, however, surprising that a worldly-minded man, like the earl, should not be able to penetrate the depth of Waltheof's character. It would have been a hard matter for any one who saw the lowly prior

<sup>8</sup> William, this earl of Albemarle, was son of Stephen, who was the brother of Judith, St. Waltheof's grandmother. Stephen and Judith were the children of Odo, earl of Albemarle, by Adeliza, sister of the Conqueror. William was first cousin to St. Waltheof's mother.

abasing himself beneath the lowest lay-brother of the community, to tell how highly favoured was this humble soul. It would have been difficult to suppose that this humble man, who busied himself so noiselessly and regularly with the rule of his convent, and threw his mind into all the wants and desires of his brethren, was all the while wrapt up in the contemplation of heavenly things, in a way in which none but those who are dead to earth can know. Sometimes our blessed Lord would, as it were, break through the cloud; and as after His resurrection He would appear suddenly in the midst of His disciples, so now and then in Waltheof's life, He all at once converted contemplation into vision, and gave His servant sensible indications of His presence. One of these visions appears to have occurred at Kirkham. One Christmas-day, while the convent was celebrating the Nativity of the Lord, as the Prior was elevating the Host, in the blessed sacrifice of the mass, he saw in his hands a child fairer than the children of men, having on his head a crown of gold, studded with jewels. His eyes beamed with light, and his face was more radiant than the whitest snow; and so ineffably sweet was his countenance, that the prior kissed the feet and the hands of the heavenly child. After this the divine vision disappeared, and Waltheof found in his hands the consecrated wafer.

The servants of Christ are, however, never suffered by Him to dwell on the joys which He vouchsafes to give them. When the Apostles were, after our Lord's ascension, straining their eyes to penetrate the cloud which carried Him out of their sight, two angels appeared, to ask them why they stood gazing up into heaven. So the vision which Waltheof saw was but for a moment, or rather it hardly could be measured by time at all; and

when it disappeared, and he came down from the altar and went back into the monastery to set about his business, all looked as it did before. The cloisters echoed to his footsteps as if nothing had happened, and the canons, bowing in silence to their prior as they passed him, reminded him that he must go on with his work. And sad work he soon had upon his hands ; that same archbishoprick of York which he had rejected was now a bone of contention in the north ; and news arrived at Kirkham that William, the treasurer, Stephen's nephew, had been elected, but that the presence of the earl of York at the election made men suspect that undue influence had been exerted, if not by William, at least by his friends. William's character was not such as to please Waltheof's Cistercian friends ; he was amiable indeed, and none accused him of immorality ; but he was at that time indolent and magnificent. They were unsparing in their censures, these Cistercian monks ; popes, cardinals, and bishops equally came under their lash, and in this case they determined to oppose William's election as being uncanonical. Waltheof was already a Cistercian in heart, and he joined himself to his neighbours, William, abbot of Rievaulx, and Richard, abbot of Fountains, in their efforts to obtain a sentence against the election. The parties in opposition to each other in the diocese of York were, on the whole, regulars against seculars, that is, at least in this case, strictness against laxity ; and Waltheof did not hesitate which side to choose. In 1142 he appealed against the election with the abbots of Fountains and of Rievaulx, and others of the regular as well as some of the cathedral clergy. In 1144 we find him at Rome with his colleagues in the appeal. No particulars appear of his journey across the Alps ; but doubtless the tombs of the Apostles saw more of Waltheof than the papal

court. How they sped in their cause has been too well narrated elsewhere to require notice in this place ; besides which, it has little to do with Waltheof's history. He brought back to Kirkham a heart not a whit more in love with the great world on account of the glimpse which he had seen of it. All that he had seen on his way to and from the great city remained on his mind like a bewildered dream ; and neither the snowy Alps, nor the blue lakes and sunny sky of Italy, seemed to him half so beautiful as the rugged outline of the Black-moor hills, and the first sight of the green banks of the winding Derwent and the tower of his own church at Kirkham, from which the bells were ringing to welcome his arrival ; and the brethren issuing out of the church with cross and banner to meet their prior.

### 3. *How Waltheof became a Monk.*

The poor brethren of Kirkham were, however, soon to lose him. Was it restlessness, this desire of quitting his station at Kirkham that arose within him, or was it a longing for obedience, and for giving up his will to that of a superior ? A great struggle went on in his heart ; for, says brother Josceline, " There increased every day in his heart the hatred of worldly pomp and the desire of his heavenly country, and he was bent on embracing a stricter order. Such was the continued wish of his heart ; but he still pondered over it, weighing with discretion the arguments for and against it. He desired instead of a canon to become a monk, and above all a monk of the Cistercian order, which seemed to him stricter and more austere than that of the canons of St. Austin. Still, as he used to tell of himself, he feared



lest his weakness should sink under such a burden. He often prayed to the Angel of great counsel that He would illumine and strengthen his spirit with the Spirit of counsel and of might, that he might choose with wise counsel, and hold fast with might whatever was best for the health of his soul. He feared lest perchance an angel of Satan, who often transforms himself into an angel of light, should be giving him poison to drink out of a golden cup. As, however, after patient waiting and long trial, his heart continued still firm and unmoved as a pillar ; he felt that the Lord had visited him, and had drawn him on to conceive this design in his heart." He would not, however, trust his own view of the case, and so he bethought himself of an old friend of his, whom he was now to meet in a new capacity. William, his companion in his journey to Rome, had died, and Aelred, his playmate and the friend of his youth in the court of Scotland, had succeeded as Abbot. So Waltheof went along the banks of the Derwent, then up the beautiful valley of the Rye to Rievaulx, where we may well imagine that he was a welcome guest, and not the less so when he stated the purpose of his visit. The result of it was that Aelred decided that Waltheof might quit Kirkham. He did not, however, claim him for Rievaulx, else his decision might appear interested. The two friends probably thought it would be too great happiness to be together in the same monastery. So the matter was compromised by Waltheof's flying away from his priory to the abbey of Wardon, in Bedfordshire, which was a colony from Rievaulx, and also founded by William d'Espec.

Waltheof sought the cloister of Wardon to obtain peace, but instead of finding what he wanted, he only raised about his head a storm on which he had not cal-

culated. First, the canons of Kirkham did their best to recall him ; they even had recourse to ecclesiastical tribunals to force him to return ; but they were unable to effect their purpose. After this, however, a greater trial awaited him. He had also placed himself very nearly within the limits of his brother's earldom. Now Simon by no means appreciated Waltheof's love of humiliation. On the contrary, he considered it a dishonour to the noble blood of the old kings of Northumberland that a scion of their stock should be a novice in a poor Cistercian monastery. A mitred abbacy he would not have quarrelled with, but that his brother should be the lowest monk in a low convent was intolerable ; and he sent a message to the brethren of Wardon that he would burn the abbey over their heads if they allowed his brother to remain amongst them. The poor monks trembled, for they well knew Simon was a man to keep his word, and amidst the general license of the period, burning an abbey was not so very rare as to make it remarkable. Waltheof, therefore, was again a fugitive, cast out on the wide world by his own mother's son. But our Lord has promised to give us an hundred fold that which we give up for His sake ; and so when Waltheof's own brother turned against him, Aelred, who was more to him than his unnatural brother, was given back to him. The monks of Wardon, when they found themselves obliged to send their novice away, transferred him to Rievaulx, where he was out of the reach of his brother.

Henceforth Waltheof's external trials are over ; yet our Lord, who never will leave His Saints to be without the cross, now prepared for him an interior trial, which was harder to bear than any other. Hitherto he had walked in the light of God's countenance in spiritual

joy; but now the countenance of the Lord no longer shone upon him, and there had succeeded a cold and dreary state of darkness, in which he seemed to have lost sight of the object of his faith. He felt neither joy nor sorrow; he had no feeling at all. When he thought on the Passion, he did not weep; and when he meditated on the Resurrection, there was the same dull blank in his soul. Formerly, fasts and vigils, and bodily suffering of all sorts, were a joy to him, because they were a means of partaking in the crucifixion of his Lord; but now all the various actions of his monastic life were gone through mechanically, as a daily task. The doctrines of the Mirror of Charity were exactly suited to his case; but, as generally happens in such temptations, he fancied that his state had something peculiar in it, which exactly excepted it from the consolations which Aelred held out. He thought that he had done wrong in leaving his priory, and he was sorely tempted to quit the Cistercian order before he finally took the vows. The devil, who knows well that obedience and patience are the proper means of escaping, in God's own time, from such spiritual depression as then weighed down his heart, was anxious to make him by a definite act break away from Rievaulx, and take the law in his own hands. But it is best to give the whole in Josceline's words:—"When Waltheof had spent some time in the cell of the novices, by a temptation of the Evil one, the observance of the rule became loathsome to him; the food appeared to him tasteless, the clothing rough and vile, the manual labour hard, the psalms and night-watches wearisome, the whole course of the order too austere. When he thought on the former years which he had spent as a prior, it grew upon him that the rule of the canons, though less austere, was more in accordance with Christian discre-

tion, and more fit for the saving of souls. As soon, however, as he felt this suggestion creep into his heart, he sought, in constant and earnest prayer, an antidote for its poison. After, however, the temptation, far from diminishing, had only increased, so that he debated whether he should quit the Cistercian order and go back to his canons, he was at length relieved by the Lord, and blushed at his own weakness. For, one day after the bell had sounded for the office, at one of the canonical hours, and all the novices had gone out in seemly order, he alone remained behind in the cell. Led by the impulse of the Spirit, he threw himself across the threshold, half in and half out of the cell, and praying, with many tears, he said, ‘O God Almighty, Creator of all, who knowest and dispensest all things, whether it be thy good pleasure that I remain a monk, or that I become again a canon, shew me, O Lord ; and take away from me this temptation which afflicts my soul.’ And our Lord heard his prayer, and soon, almost without feeling, the mourner felt ‘the dull hard stone within him’ disappear. He never knew what happened to him in that hour, or how it happened, but he felt himself raised off the ground, and found himself in the seat which belonged to him in the cell, and where he used to read and meditate. Nothing can express so well what he then felt as the words of an English poet, whom we have almost unconsciously quoted :—

These are thy wonders, hourly wrought,  
Thou Lord of time and thought,  
Lifting and lowering souls at will,  
Crowding a world of good or ill  
Into a moment’s vision ; even as light  
Mounts o’er a cloudy ridge, and all is bright,  
From west to east, one thrilling ray  
Turning a wintry world to May.

Waltheof never felt the temptation after this; and in due course, at the end of the year, he received the white habit at the hands of Aelred. Great must have been the joy of both in that hour when Aelred put the habit upon his friend with the usual words, "The Lord put off thee the old man with his deeds," and the convent responded, "Amen."

#### 4. *How Waltheof became an Abbot.*

Waltheof and Aelred had been, as it were, drifted together for a little time, probably that Waltheof might be strengthened for the work which was now before him. This was the reason that the temptation above-mentioned was sent to him, according to brother Joscelyn. "By a wondrous providence," he says, "our God, in His wondrous mercy, permitted him whom He destined for the government of souls to be tried by this temptation, for the increase of his crown, and that by his own experience he might have compassion on others." And he proceeds to tell us what was this government of souls. In the year 1147, the monks of Melrose elected him their Abbot, and sent to Rievaulx to beg of Aelred to give him permission to accept the office. Again, therefore, the two friends were separated, though not for ever, for the abbot of Rievaulx was the regular visitor of the community of Melrose. It was Waltheof's lot to win back all his old friends in the course of his life; after many years, he now found again his step-father king David, and his brother prince Henry. How his whole former life must have rushed upon him as he re-crossed the border, after so many years of monastic trials! His life, as a courtier in Scotland, must have

appeared a very point in his existence, and the adventure of the ring and the lady at that distance almost ludicrous. When he reached his abbey, he found himself lord of an extensive domain ; for though the abbot of Melrose was not the mitred prelate that he afterwards became, yet the whole countryside was in his hands. The people had been all but converted by St. Cuthbert, as prior of the monastery ; and king David had endowed the community with extensive lands, so that the abbot of Melrose, by a double title, was spiritual and temporal lord of a large part of Tweeddale. Waltheof found his abbey in a delicate state. Richard, the first abbot of New Melrose, had just been deposed for harsh conduct towards the monks ; the new abbot had, therefore, to recover the authority lost by his predecessor, without irritating the brethren, who, of course, were exceedingly sensitive to any exertion of discipline on the part of their spiritual ruler.

As Melrose was, in point of fact, a new abbey, this state of things might have ruined it. The abbey had seen strange vicissitudes : first, it had come under St. Columban's rule,<sup>9</sup> with all its minute and severe penances, and its uncompromising severity. It seems hard to say precisely when it became Benedictine, for the rules of

<sup>9</sup> Mr. Michelet thinks that St. Columban's rule differed from that of St. Benedict, in that it was mystical to such an extent as to make light of the grossest sins of the flesh. If he had construed the passage on which he founds his opinion, he would have seen that it has no reference to actual guilt, but was a provision to exclude the very suspicion of it. *Si quis monachus dormierit in una domo cum muliere, duos dies in pane et aqua.* What he translates, *S'il ignorait que ce fut une faute,* means *Si nescierit mulierem esse in domo.* It would be invidious to point out a blunder however gross in so long and so able a history, if so monstrous a conclusion had not been founded upon it. —*Histoire de France*, tom. i. 277.

St. Columban and of St. Benedict were not so far opposed to each other that they were incapable of existing side by side. Some communities observed both together, till at length St. Benedict's rule got the day, as being the wisest legislation for monks, considering the average capabilities of man. While St. Columban's monks fasted every day till evening, St. Benedict varied the hour at different times of the year. Again, there is a special provision for difference of climate in the Benedictine habit, which is not the case in that of St. Columban. On the whole, the Benedictine rule was found on experience the better. It was framed in that mild Italian spirit which was needed to temper the fierceness of our northern blood; and probably the rejection of the Scottish usages about Easter, and the Benedictine rule, came hand in hand into Melrose. Certainly St. Cuthbert, who was himself a convert from the Scottish mode of keeping Easter, was also the first to introduce St. Benedict's rule into Lindisfarne. This is bringing the matter very near Melrose, and seems to point to him as the person under whom the abbey first became Benedictine. In the time of Waltheof's predecessor it underwent another change, for king David had made it Cistercian, and put it under the jurisdiction of Rievaulx. The convent seems to have been entirely removed from its old spot, for, about half a mile from the present ruins of the abbey, is a place which tradition assigns as the site of old Melrose, on a promontory, stretching so far into the Tweed that the waters all but convert it into an island. The convent did not at first flourish in its new locality, owing to the harshness of abbot Richard, and perhaps to the impatience of the community under their new rule. The monks were very anxious to get rid of their abbot,

but they were afraid to take any steps to get him deposed, as he was an intimate friend of the king. At last, they hit upon the expedient of electing Waltheof in his room. This effectually disarmed David's anger, and Waltheof was joyfully welcomed by him back to his dominions.

Waltheof thus found himself again a man in authority. During the rest of his life he was now to be everything for other people, and nothing for himself. Of the many years which he spent at Melrose but little is known ; how they passed, however, we may judge by the kind of idea which was still preserved of him in the abbey at the time when Josceline wrote his life. Every tradition points to the paternal kindness and sweetness of his rule. The old monks still told of him, that when a monk, who had fallen into a grievous fault, had once confessed it publicly and done penance, he would always punish severely any one who reproached the offender, or made any allusion to his fault. "Often he had in his mouth," says Josceline, "that saying of the blessed Hugh of Cluny, 'If either happened to me, I would rather be punished for showing too much mercy, than for too much severity.' In the secret of the confessional, he showed himself so mild and soothing a physician, that, however stubborn was the breast of the sinner, the droppings of his words of holy consolation would soften it to a true and fruitful penitence ; and, by smiting it with the rod of the Lord's Cross, he would cleave the hard rock, till it burst forth into a fount of tears ; and then, when he saw him weep, tears of compassion used to flow from his eyes." A tradition still remained of the beauty of his countenance ; and it was said that, notwithstanding his austerities, his face had still a delicate colour in the midst of its paleness.



Besides this, the earnestness of his preaching was remembered, as well as his eloquent and lucid speech, whether he spoke in French, English, or Latin, of all which languages he was perfect master. With these qualities and acquirements, it is not wonderful that he should be said to have gained an immediate influence on all who came in his way, by his persuasive words and kindness of manner. And this overflowing love extended itself even to animals. Stories were told of his affection for the old grey horse which he constantly rode, and which he used playfully to call his brother Grizzle.<sup>1</sup> He was even known to punish himself severely with the discipline used in the order for having killed an insect, saying that he had taken away the life of a creature of God, which he could not restore.

It was, however, not only within the walls of the abbey that his kindness of heart was known. The abbot of Melrose, as head of the Cistercian order in Scotland, was not a man who could always remain within the cloisters of his monastery. He had to go up into the Highlands as far as Elgin to found the abbey of Kinloss; and at another time down among the Cumberland hills, to lead a colony from Melrose to Holmcultram. In his time, too, an abbey was projected by his half-brother, Prince Henry, and the site was fixed upon near the town of Cupar-angus, not far from the banks of the river Isla; it was not, however, put into execution till the time of his successor. His greatest sphere of action was in the wild country around Melrose itself. The abbot's grey horse and his truly apostolic retinue were well known in the valley of the Tweed, and among the many winding glens, which each sends its tributary stream into the broad river, along

<sup>1</sup> Frater Ferrandus, v. Ducange in voc.

the banks of which lay the possessions of the abbey. This was the very ground which had witnessed St. Cuthbert's labours before he was made bishop of Lindisfarne, and the Saint had never a worthier successor than abbot Waltheof. His retinue was not of the kind which brother Josceline regrets was becoming in fashion among the Cistercian abbots of his time. They could not sleep, he says, for a night in a grange of the abbey without a train of servants and numerous sumpter-horses with pack-saddles containing mantles of the finest cloth, lined with lamb's-wool. His train consisted of a monk and a lay-brother, with three boys to look after the horses. The abbot was so little solicitous about his personal appearance, and travelled with so little luggage himself, that he used to ride with the boots and other apparel of his attendants slung on in front, to save them the trouble of carrying them.

He was, however, not the less beloved by the vassals of the abbey because he travelled about in the guise of a poor man. Melrose was the regular refuge of the whole countryside, in the midst of the many physical sufferings which came upon the peasantry in those hard times. Sometimes grievous famines came upon the land, and the whole population from a great distance round used to assemble about the abbey. It required faith to undertake to feed these multitudes, and God rewarded the faith of the abbot, by working miracles to enable him to do what he had undertaken. At one time, it is said, a sore distress afflicted the country, and no one knew what to do. It was yet three months to the harvest, and the last year's provision was all spent. The corn was still green in the valleys and on the hill-sides; and what was to be done in the meanwhile, before autumn came? Melrose was the only resource, and so all trooped off to

the Tweed side with their wives and children, and thronged the abbey gates. It was hardly possible that the granaries of the monks could supply them; but at least it would be better to die under the abbey walls, where the brethren would administer the rites of the church to the dying, than to lie down and perish in detachments in their lonely glens. A vast crowd, therefore, collected together, and, as it were, besieged the gates of Melrose. Waltheof went out with Thomas the cellarer and some of the brethren to learn how large was the multitude. He found that they had regularly encamped about the abbey, under the trees of the many woods, and on the level grounds by the side of the Tweed, for two miles around; four thousand men were said to be assembled on the spot. Waltheof turned to Thomas, and asked him how this number of men were to be nourished till the autumn. Thomas was called in the country the good cellarer, on account of his kindness to the poor; he said that the numerous flocks and herds of the abbey might be slain to feed them; but, he added, all the corn of the abbey was consumed except what remained in the two granges of Gattonside and Eildon. The abbot, on hearing this, took his crosier in his hand and crossed the Tweed to Gattonside, then a grange belonging to the abbey, now a village smiling amongst its orchards opposite to Melrose. He then went into the granary, and striking his crosier into the corn, knelt down and prayed with many tears. He remained a long time on his knees, and, when he rose, he made the sign of the cross, and went away; he also proceeded to an upland farm called the Eildon grange, and did the same thing there; then he turned to Thomas and said, "Now disperse boldly, and give to the poor and to ourselves, for God will give the increase, and multiply enough for the use of both."

The monk did so, and the abbot's faith was rewarded, for the granaries of the two granges lasted out the three months which intervened to the harvest.

It was not, however, only among the poor of the land that Waltheof obtained influence ; his noble birth, and his brother's high station, made him a conspicuous character ; and whenever the business of the abbey for a moment brought him in contact with his lofty kindred, the contrast between his poverty and the station to which he was born acted as a practical homily in a place where the voice of religion was seldom heard. He once had occasion to go to king Stephen, who, as well as the king of Scotland, was his kinsman. This meeting with Stephen took place in the open air, and he found him standing with Simon, the earl of Northampton, his own brother. The abbot had not altered his apparel or increased the number of his attendants, though he was going into the king's presence. He appeared as usual on his old grey horse, with the boots of the grooms slung on before him instead of costly trappings ; and altogether he was a very uncouth figure to appear among the nobles, who were round the king, dressed in their burnished armour, it could not be denied. His brother felt ashamed of him as he approached, and said : " See, my lord king, how my brother and thy kinsman does honour to his lineage." Stephen fixed his eyes on the abbot, and said with his usual oath " By God's birth, if thou and I had only the grace to see it, he is an honour to us ; he is an ornament to our race, even as the gem adorns the gold in which it is set." Then he came forward and kissed the abbot's hand, and asked for his blessing, and bent his head to receive it. He granted Waltheof all that he wanted, and took leave of him. After he was gone, Stephen remembered his own troubled life, how he had

to fight for his crown, and how little it profited him. He was a merciful prince, and of much good feeling, and was affected by this encounter. He was no friend to churchmen, on bad terms with the Pope and with both English archbishops ; but his religious feelings were roused, and he burst into tears, and said, " This man has put all worldly things under his feet, but we are in chase after this fleeting world, and are losing body and soul in the pursuit." Such was the effect of the sight of Waltheof on Stephen ; his prayers for his brother had a more lasting result, though he had to wait long to see the fruit of them. Simon listened at last to his brother's exhortations, and repented sincerely of his irregular life. He founded the abbey of St. Andrew at Northampton, in which house St. Thomas afterwards took refuge, as well as a nunnery dedicated to St. Mary without the same town, and the Cistercian abbey of Saltrey, dependent on the house of Wardon.

The favour of God was manifested to Waltheof in other ways besides this answer to his prayers. Our blessed Lord rewarded the crucified soul of His servant with a foretaste of those joys which He will give to His blessed ones in heaven. Sometimes, at long intervals, when the abbot was keeping his Christmas or Easter festival in the church at Melrose, Christ was pleased to manifest Himself to His Saint in visions, one of which we will give in the words of Josceline :—" Once when on Easter-night he celebrated the vigil, and the convent was chaunting psalms and hymns, the Saint saw in the Spirit the whole course of the Lord's Passion, as though it were going on before his eyes. It seemed to him that he saw the Lord, after the scourging and mocking, bearing the crown of thorns upon His head, crucified on the tree, His hands and feet distended by

the nails. He thought that he saw Him giving up the ghost, and commending His soul into the hands of the Father, and afterwards pouring forth from His pierced side blood and water, to be our bath and our chalice, the price and the reward of man's salvation. He looked upon His soul, separated from the body, spoiling hell, and, followed by a numberless multitude of souls, coming out from the pit, resuming the body, bringing joy to the Angels by His resurrection, and by His appearance prostrating the soldiers, who were set to watch lest the Life should arise from the dead. Then in a vision he saw Him beautiful, in His robes of glory, going forth in the greatness of His strength, bringing into paradise the spoils of captivity."

#### *5. How Waltheof was taken to his rest.*

This was the way in which the Lord recompensed him for the austerities with which he crucified his flesh, for his intense devotion, and for the many nights spent on the cold stones in the church, after the brethren had retired to rest, when compline was over. But He further rewarded him, by taking him to his rest from the cares of the world, and by calling him away while he was still at Melrose in the midst of his monks.

Waltheof had been many years abbot of Melrose, and there seemed but little likelihood of his being disturbed by attempts to remove him. He was, however, to have another trial before he died. In the year 1159, when St. Aelred happened to be at Melrose, the brethren were one day surprised to see a large and glittering cavalcade approach the abbey: it was composed partly of ecclesiastics, partly of men whose dress and bearing showed

them to be of high rank. They proved to be several of the canons, accompanied by the great men of the realm, come to offer Waltheof the vacant bishopric of St. Andrew's. The abbot, as they had expected, refused the see ; but they had recourse to St. Aelred, as his superior, to force him to accept it. The Saint enjoined him on his obedience to accept it. Waltheof, however, begged his friend to hear him in private ; and, when they were together, he informed him that God had revealed to him that he had now not long to remain in the world, and that the charge was too much for one who was soon to sicken and die. St. Aelred looked mournfully at his friend, and saw that, from his emaciated features and wasted frame, death could never be looked upon as unlikely : but he would not believe the message which Waltheof gave him ; he shut his eyes to the notion that his friend was to go to his rest before him, and leave him alone upon earth ; he therefore persisted in his command. Then they returned together to the chapter-house, where the assembly was anxiously waiting for their return. All were glad to hear St. Aelred's decision ; but Waltheof stood up and said, "I have put off my old garment, how should I put it on again ? I have washed my feet clean, how should I stain them again with the dust of the world's business ?" Then he added, solemnly, with the tone and manner of a prophet, "Believe me, ye will elect another man, and have him for your bishop." Then he pointed with his finger to a stone in the pavement of the chapter-house, and said, "There is the place of my rest ; here will be my habitation, among my children, as long as the Lord wills." All who were present saw that he was resolved, and the assembly retired, saying that they would let the matter rest for a time.

Waltheof was right ; soon after this he was taken violently ill ; his body was racked with pains. About the time of the dog-days, says Josceline, he grew very much worse, and all men thought that he must die at once. Nevertheless he lived for three weeks after this in dreadful pain of body, but perfectly collected in mind, so that in the intervals of his agonies he used to call the brethren around him, and exhort them to love and concord amongst each other, and charity to the poor. During the last nine days he seemed to be dying every moment, and the attendants wondered how it was possible that a frame so exhausted and so racked with pain could hold together. Then it was remembered that he had been used to pray that in his last sickness he might suffer pain as a penance for his sins, so that his life seemed to be prolonged in these fiery pains, in answer to his own prayers. As soon as a fit of pain had passed away and a short breathing time was allowed him, he would smile faintly, and lift up his hands, as if to thank God. Once he said to those about him, “ Oh ! if I could but speak, I could tell you of wondrous things which I have seen.” It is probable that God, who had so often favoured him with visions, now deigned to console him with a foretaste of heavenly joys, even while he was lying in agony. On Lammas-day, when the Church celebrates the memory of St. Peter’s miraculous delivery from prison, he was so visibly dying that he received the Body and Blood of Christ and the rite of extreme Unction. Yet for two days and two nights he lay in pain, hourly expecting death, and yet kept alive to suffer. About the dawn of day on the 3rd of August, the convent was summoned to be present at the death of their father, and he was placed on sackcloth to die, according to the rule of the order. When he heard the low chaunt of the psalms and litanies around him, he



opened his eyes and looked round upon them as if to thank them. He seemed so much revived that they retired; once again this scene had been renewed, when after sext, as the convent was sitting down to its mid-day meal, they were summoned for the last time. "There," says Josceline, "with the chaunts of his brethren sounding about him, this holy soul, after being tried as in a fiery furnace with fevers and manifold pains, and purified as gold in the fire, quitted the mortal tabernacle of its spotless body. Thus did the holy father pass from the world to the Father, from faith to sight, from hope to joy, from the shadow to the reality, from darkness to light, from the toilsome race to the hard-won crown, from the misery of this present life to the everlasting glory of a life never to pass away."

Thirteen years after the death of the Saint, the stone under which his body lay, in the very place which he had pointed out, was raised by abbot Josceline, and his remains were found uncorrupt. Again the same thing was found forty-eight years after his death. Many miracles were done at his tomb, which now lies neglected and unknown among the ruins of his abbey. A stone indeed is pointed out by tradition in the choir, to which his remains may have been translated. Nothing, however, certain is known, except that his body will rise gloriously in the resurrection of the just.



THE LIFE OF

**St. Robert.**<sup>1</sup>

---

WHAT is meant by the word obedience, as applied to our blessed Lord, we cannot tell, still less can we conceive how, in consequence of His humiliation, He could be exalted. All that we know is, that for us He bowed Himself down to the death of the cross, in obedience to the will of the Father ; and that for our sakes He, in His human nature, was received up into glory, though His everlasting glory could neither grow nor decrease. His glory is represented as being the reward of His voluntary sufferings ; and yet, incomprehensible as it is, this is not a mere representation, but both the glory and the sufferings are real. And this, again, is the case with all members of His Church ; as His merits are imparted to them not by a nominal imputation, but by a real and ineffable union, so also the cross which they bear is not figurative, but a very crucifixion of body and soul. In proportion, too, as Christians are more saintly,

<sup>1</sup> This life of St. Robert is principally taken from a manuscript life of him in the British Museum, which contains a few particulars not in the Bollandists. It speaks of having heard things spoken of him by the old men in the Abbey, and also of a book preserved there called *Collectaneus Sti. Roberti*, containing his meditations and prayers, and also of the book of his miracles. Many miraculous stories are told of him in the life in the Bollandists.

that is, more Christian, they also partake more of the cross. They are not content with the narrow bounds of natural suffering, but they seek out for themselves, as it were, a supernatural cross, that they may learn to live above the flesh and to crucify it with their Lord. It is this inseparable connection between glory and suffering which makes the most contemplative Saints to be also the most austere. It is this which has driven holy monks and hermits into the wilderness; they durst not, without crucifying their bodies, give themselves up to the holy joys into which their love for Christ threw them, when they contemplated His mysteries. "There is no Thabor without Calvary," as it has been expressed; and "this is a fundamental law of Christian mysticism."

The first Cistercians were no exceptions to this rule, which is, in fact, the principle which gave life to all monastic orders, and which connects together ascetics in all ages, St. Anthony and St. Bruno, St. Benedict and St. Romuald. On the low, vine-clad plains of Burgundy St. Bernard renewed what St. Basil had begun in the solitudes of Pontus. In the wild forests and on the lonely mountains of the north of England the same scenes appeared as in the first ages were witnessed in the deserts of Egypt. And this was especially the case with the first generation of English Cistercians; from peculiar circumstances, they were distinguished by sterner features than those of France. There is little enough of sternness in the idea which we form of St. Bernard writing his sermons on the Canticles in the arbour of twisted flowers,<sup>2</sup> in the garden of Clairvaux; or in St. Basil's description of his solitude, and of the

<sup>2</sup> *Pisatiis floribus intextum. Vita Sti. Bern.*

clear river sweeping round his woody mountains which collected its waters into a clear basin like a lake, and then again narrowed into a river. But our first English Cistercians had little leisure for scenery. The colony sent to Rievaulx came over from France and found a home ready for them ; but the first monks who broke away from a Benedictine abbey, as St. Stephen did from Molesme, had to endure a trial which it required superhuman energy to bear. Their history forms the principal portion of the very brief life of Robert of Newminster which remains to us.

Few, indeed, are the particulars which are related of him, except as far as he is connected with Fountains Abbey. He was born in the district of Craven, apparently at the village of Gargrave.<sup>3</sup> He went to the university of Paris, and his biographer appeals to a book on the Psalms, which he is said to have composed, as a proof of his progress in theology. He then was ordained priest to his native village of Gargrave. He next appears as a monk at Whitby. In the year 1132, however, news reached the monastery of a movement in the Benedictine order, which entirely altered Robert's plan of life ; and we must transport the reader into the chapter-house of St. Mary's abbey at York, that he may see how the voice from Cîteaux found an echo in England.

The abbey was rich and magnificent, but any one who entered it soon perceived that St. Benedict would hardly have known it for his. It was not that the monks were men of scandalous lives. "On the con-

<sup>3</sup> Ex provincia Eboracensi quæ Craven dicitur. Gargrave ubi natus fuerat. MS. The Church of St. Andrew of Gargrave was given in 1321 to the Abbey of Sallay by William Percy. Vide Dugdale.

trary," says the chronicle of Fountains, "they lived honestly, but they fell far short of the perfection enjoined by the rule." The abbot was a kind-hearted man, but he was old and ignorant, and the monks led an easy life. A noise of chattering and laughing might be heard all over the abbey; some, indeed, kept aloof, and would go into the church to pray while others were idle. The greater part, after compline, instead of going to the dormitory, walked about, and, dividing into knots, talked about the news of the day. Thus there were two parties in the community; but the strict party were a very small minority, only thirteen monks. However, they had at their head Richard, the prior, and Gervase, the sub-prior, so they hoped that something might be done through them; and, on the eve of the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, he went, with the sub-prior, to Godfrey, the abbot, and propounded to him his thoughts as to the lax state of the abbey. But the poor abbot trembled at the very notion of innovation. He said that the convent would have an ill name, that all the world lived as they lived, and that he did not see why they should affect singularity; in fine, it was impossible. Richard, however, stood his ground manfully; as for innovation, it was only going back to the rule of St. Benedict; and, as for impossibility, the monks of Clairvaux and Citeaux found it possible enough. The abbot put off his decision, and begged him to put down in writing what he wanted. By the time, however, that this was done, the other monks had heard of what was rumoured; "and," says the chronicle, "there arose a great tumult in the monastery." Richard, seeing that the case was hopeless, applied to Thurstan, archbishop of York, saying that they were threatened

with excommunication by their brethren. They protested that all that they wanted was "to follow Christ, who was a poor man, in His voluntary poverty, and to bear Christ's cross on their bodies." The archbishop applied to abbot Godfrey; and the old abbot wept, and said that he would not oppose their holy resolution, but could do nothing without the chapter. So the archbishop promised to meet the chapter.

On the appointed day, Thurstan, with several grave and reverend ecclesiastics connected with the cathedral, went to St. Mary's abbey, to try to pacify it. When, however, they reached as far as the door of the chapterhouse, they were met by the abbot, who protested that the archbishop alone should enter, without the secular clerks who attended him. When Thurstan remonstrated, out rushed from the chapterhouse the whole convent, and with them a number of strange monks, Cluniacs and Benedictines, assembled for the occasion. Such an uproar ensued as St. Mary's abbey has never witnessed before or since. They roared, they bellowed, and they declared that they would rather suffer an interdict for an hundred years than yield an inch. Suddenly they shouted, "Seize them, seize them!" and then they attacked Richard and his friends, and would have torn them to pieces, if they had not clasped the archbishop's knees for shelter. Then they drove archbishop, monks, and clerks, altogether, pell-mell into the church, with cries of "Seize the rebels! seize the traitors!" So the archbishop quitted the monastery, and took with him the brethren thus forcibly ejected, being twelve priests and one sub-deacon, and lodged them in his house. Here they remained till Christmas day, when the archbishop took them with him to Ripon minster, and, in the midst of the

solemn services of the festival, he assigned them their habitation, of which they set out to take possession, after having elected Richard for their abbot.

This was what Robert heard at Whitby; he must also have been told that nothing could equal the desolation of the place or the hardships which, in that rugged season, they endured. We know nothing of the previous workings of his mind, but that this did not deter him is quite clear, for he obtained leave from his abbot to join them, and set out to find their habitation, and a more desolate scene could hardly be imagined. It was on the banks of the Skeld, under a ridge of rocks, and surrounded by pathless woods, then in all the nakedness of winter. And where were the monks themselves? Under a broad elm, in the midst of the belt of rocks, they had made a hut with hurdles roofed with turf. Here they lived, in the midst of the terrible cold of winter; their very existence was a miracle, but it was still more wonderful how meditation, and the chaunting of psalms by night, and the regular hours, and the holy sacrifice of the mass, could go on regularly, almost in the open air, to the sound of the wind howling about them through the leafless trees, and of the hoarse roaring of the swollen Skeld. Robert's must have been a resolute heart, not to be appalled by such a scene as this; but he was supported by his resolution to suffer with Christ, so that the bitter cold, and the long fasts, and coarse food of the little community were a source of joy to him, because they united him to his Lord.

He found the brethren employed in hewing down trees to build a chapel. As for tilling their ground, that was out of the question at that time of the year; and they were supported solely by supplies which they ob-



tained from the Archbishop of York. It seems wonderful how human bodies could manage to pass the winter in such a solitude, and with so little shelter, but the grace of God supported them. "No sign of sadness," says the chronicle, "was seen among them ; not a sound of murmuring, but all blessed God with entire fervour, poor in worldly goods, but strong in faith." After the winter was over, and the voice of spring was heard in their woods, they determined to send to Clairvaux that they might be affiliated to the Cistercian order. We may suppose with what joy the blessed St. Bernard received the two brethren whom they sent, and wrote to them a letter with his own hand, sending them an aged monk called Godfrey, to teach them Cistercian discipline. According to Godfrey's directions, they built their house, and ordered their whole life according to the institutes of Clairvaux. Very soon the spark which they had kindled spread in England, and ten novices appeared to share their hard life with them. Abbot Richard received them joyfully ; but it was a great act of faith to receive them, for still they had no possessions of their own but what the archbishop of York gave them. For two years they struggled on, sometimes obliged to live on roots and on the leaves of trees, till they almost despaired, and Richard set out for Clairvaux to expose their distress to its holy abbot. St. Bernard assigned them a grange belonging to his abbey, for their support, but Richard on his return found that God had had compassion upon them, and had rewarded their faith by moving the heart of Hugh, the dean of York, to become a novice of the poor house of Fountains, and to give them all his wealth, so that the abbot when he returned, found plenty reigning in his monastery. He found also a library and the books of the Holy Scripture, which Hugh had given them.

Years went on, and the community flourished more and more, till in the fifth year after their foundation, a noble baron, called Ralph de Merlay, offered to endow a Cistercian house if they would send a colony of White monks into his lands. Abbot Richard joyfully assented, and he appointed Robert to be the leader of the twelve brethren of the new house. "It was a beautiful place, pleasant with water, and very fair wood about it," and was called Newminster.

Of Robert's government of his abbey, such scanty records remain that it is impossible to form a connected history of it. As a proof of its flourishing condition, three colonies were sent from his abbey during his lifetime, Pipewell in 1143, Sallay and Roche about 1147. Further than this, only scattered notices are inserted, two of which are here put down, because they help to give a faint idea of the abbot, and because they have never been published elsewhere. One day, Abbot Robert wished to return from a grange, where he had been visiting the lay-brethren of the abbey; a great festival was approaching, and he wished to hurry back to Newminster. He had no palfrey to convey him back, so he called for a pack-horse which used to carry bread to the granges. He mounted his sorry steed, and pulled his cowl over his face, and began to pray and meditate as he was wont to do wherever he went. As he was riding along, he was roused from his meditation by a voice rudely asking him whether he had seen the lord abbot in the place which he had left. This was a nobleman who had come to the abbey on business, and had been directed to seek him at the grange. Seeing this shabby figure, the nobleman thought that it was some lay-brother. Robert did not choose to undeceive him, for he wished still to pass for a poor lay-brother, and so he shrewdly said, "when I

was last at the grange, the abbot was there." But the nobleman when he had looked further at the speaker's features, knew at once from his saintly face that the abbot himself was speaking to him, so he humbly got down from his fine horse, and made the abbot mount it, and when he had finished his business with him, he begged for his blessing and went away.

At another time a great trial befell Robert, one probably more harassing than all his bodily mortifications. He was accused to St. Bernard of misconduct in the government of his abbey, and it appears that the saint so far believed it that Robert was obliged to take a journey into France to clear himself. But when St. Bernard saw him and marked the angelic temper with which the abbot bore the humiliation, without speaking harshly of his accusers, he felt sure that he was innocent, and from that time loved him the more. During this journey he also saw Pope Eugenius,<sup>4</sup> and returned back to Newminster full of joy, for good had come out of evil ; and it is especially recorded that he did not speak a word of reproach to his accusers when he returned.

It was in 1159 that this saint passed to his rest. He had been to visit his great friend, St. Godric, the holy hermit of Finchale, whom he used to consult in all spiritual matters. It was now fifty years since St. Godric had entered his hermitage ; and though he was lying in extreme weakness on his bed from which he never rose, yet his mind rose above his body, and he was endowed with many supernatural gifts so that he often knew of events which happened a great distance off as though he

<sup>4</sup> This fixes the date to 1147-8. William Bishop of Durham, who is said in the MS. to have given the lands of Walsingham to the abbey, is William of St. Barbara.

were present. It was a little before the feast of the Lord's Ascension that he quitted St. Godric to hasten back to his monastery, and the holy hermit told him at parting, that he should see his face no more. On the Saturday after the festival, he fell ill, and knew that he was to die. When he had received the Holy Sacrament, and was visibly dying, the older brethren of the monastery came to him, begging of him to name as his successor the man whom he thought most fit. But the saint said, "I know well that ye will not follow my advice, but elect brother Walter," and so indeed it befell after his death. Soon after this he raised his hands to heaven, and prayed for his spiritual sons, and for his monastery, and then he passed away to the joys of heaven on the 7th of June, 1159. At the time that he gave up his soul into the hands of God, a vision appeared to St. Godric, which we will give in the words of the chronicle. "The man of God, Godric, saw while he was praying, an intense light penetrating into the darkness of the night, and two walls of brightness reaching from earth to heaven. Between these walls angels were flying up to heaven, bearing with songs of joy, the soul of abbot Robert, one on the right hand, the other on the left. The soul, as far as it could be seen, was like a globe of fire. As they were ascending, the enemy of the human race met them, but went back in confusion, for he could find nothing to lay hold of in him. And the servant of God saw the soul of his dear friend thus ascend to heaven, of which the gates were opened for him. And, lo ! a voice was heard, repeating twice, 'Enter now, my friends.'"

The body of St. Robert was buried first in the chapter, and afterwards translated to the choir in consequence of the miracles which took place at his tomb.

---

LIVES

OF

THE ENGLISH SAINTS.

St. Aelred,

ABBOT OF RIEVAUX.

---

MANSUETI HÆREDITABUNT TERRAM, ET DELECTABUNTUR IN  
MULTITUDINE PACIS.

LONDON :  
JAMES TOOVEY, 192, PICCADILLY.

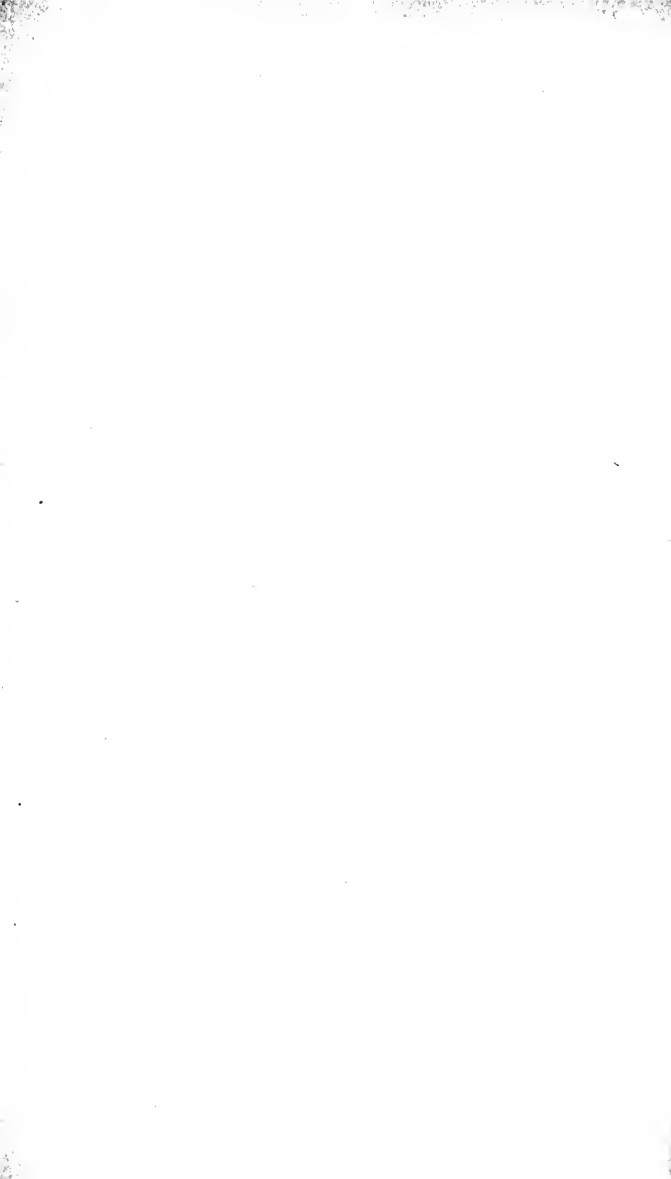
---

1845.



## CONTENTS.

Chap.		Page
	PREFACE . . . . .	v
1.	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
	THE OLD MONASTERY . . . . .	6
2.	THE REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND . . . . .	16
3.	THE STRUGGLE . . . . .	36
4.	THE BATTLE OF THE STANDARD . . . . .	54
5.	THE CISTERCIAN NOVICE . . . . .	63
6.	THE SPIRIT OF CITEAUX . . . . .	79
7.	THE WORLD IN THE CHURCH . . . . .	88
8.	THE CISTERCIAN ABBOT . . . . .	104
9.	CISTERCIAN TEACHING . . . . .	127





## PREFACE.

It is necessary to say a few words on the sources from which the present Life is derived. The account of St. Aelred's parentage is taken from a manuscript in the Bodleian Library, (Laud, 668) in which are several works ascribed to him, and amongst others, one "De Sanctis Ecclesiæ Hagulstadensis et eorum miraculis." Whether this work is by him or not, the author has not sufficient critical judgment to pronounce. It is in some places assigned to him, but one circumstance against it is, that it is principally a Sermon, preached in the Church of Hexham, on the translation of the relics of the old Bishops of Hexham, apparently by the Prior of the Canons. A great part of it, however, from fol. 67 of the manuscript, is a written continuation of the history, and was not preached. If one may be allowed to conjecture, this part might be written by St. Aelred. It is like his style (though it should be said that the Sermon also is like it), and the historical know-

ledge which it displays, also makes it likely to be his. There is nothing in the M.S. itself to indicate that the persons of whom it gives an account were St. Aelred's ancestors ; this fact is gathered from Richard of Hexham, *De statu Hagulstadenſis Eccleſiæ*, b. 2, c. 9. There is also an incidental proof that St. Aelred's ancestors were persons connected with the Church of Durham, in a letter from Reginald, a monk of Durham, to St. Aelred, in which he thanks him for some collections, taken from documents in the Church of Durham by his ancestors, and communicated by him. This letter is found in a Bodleian manuscript, Fairfax, 6.

The life in Capgrave and the Bollandists has only been partially followed, as it contains various historical inaccuracies. St. Aelred's own works have been on the whole the principal authority made use of. A few notices of the Saint have been inserted in the Life of St. Waltheof, to whom they rather belong. The author hoped to have brought the two lives out together, which, however, has been found impossible.

St. Aelred was canonized by Pope Celestine III., A. D. 1191, according to the Peterborough Annals.

LIFE OF

**St. Aelred.**

---

CHAPTER I. \*

*Introduction.*

It is often said that things look on paper or on canvass very different from what they are in reality ; how often is the traveller disappointed, on arriving at a spot of which he had read in poetry, or seen portrayed by a painter. We repeat over and over again to ourselves that it is beautiful, as if to persuade ourselves of it, and yet there is something wanting ; after all, we have seen woods as green, and streams as clear, and rocks as wild, and the ruined tower that looks over the stream is but a very poor ruin, as the baron who lived there was probably a very indifferent character. And yet were the poet or the painter so unfaithful as we suppose ? They saw it under some particular aspect, when the sun was upon it, or when the woods were coloured by autumn, and they caught it at some moment when one of Nature's endless combinations had made it look more than usually lovely. No two persons see the same scene under the same aspect ; it will not look to-morrow as it does now, and yet it is the same sun, and

the same trees, and the same river. And so it is with history ; the historian must colour his work with his own mind ; it is his view of facts, and yet it may nevertheless be true. Nay, in some respects it is more true than the view which a contemporary might take of them. Kings and queens are doubtless very different from the ermine-covered things which we think them to be, and we must make them objects of the intellect before we can judge of them ; just as a surgeon must in a manner forget that he is operating on flesh and blood, before he can do his duty. Besides which the ideas that contemporaries have of the men of their day, are after all only theories ; they are but approximations to the truth ; events and actions are but exponents of the inward life of men and nations, and none on earth can judge them precisely as they are. We have in this sense only a *view* of our dearest friends, and yet it does not follow that we love an abstraction or an idea. And so it by no means follows that history is untrue because it is the view of the historian ; it is coloured of course by his character and his opinions. The facts of history want an interpretation and are utterly meaningless, like an unknown language, until they are viewed in relation to each other and with the whole period to which they belong. This is what the historian supplies ; his view may be true or false, but all views are not false, because they are partly subjective. All views are not true, for that would in fact be saying that all are false, but some are right and others are wrong, and that, though the facts related are given with equal honesty ; just as in physical science experiments are the same, but the true explanation of them is the simplest formula which will take in all their results.

All this eminently applies to the lives of the blessed

Saints, because the view which we have of them is in all cases coloured by the reverence of the Christian world, and yet it is by no means falsified. It is history with the perpetual interpretation of Christendom ; the mind of the Church acting upon facts in the life of one of her children. It may be quite true that in many instances false miracles or actions which may be proved never to have taken place, may have been ascribed to them. An unknown monk in some obscure monastery may have written a life of a Saint, merely putting together all the traditions which remained of him, without caring to separate the true from the false ; but still the result of the whole may be true ; and the general aspect in which Christendom views the Saint may be the right one, though some particular stories may be false. How few in many instances are the facts known about some of the Saints in the middle ages. Their parentage is often forgotten, and the history of their early years unknown ; or perhaps the names of their parents are preserved with the vague and suspicious addition that they were of very noble birth. Some few great deeds are on record, but the internal struggles which led to them are all forgotten ; all at once they appear before us as perfect Saints, as if no discipline had been required to form them. We are left to eke out the scanty materials of their lives with what we know must have happened, from the character of the times and from the manners of the age. And yet perhaps we should hardly regret this ; the picture of a Saint with the aureole round his head and the meek expression of joy on his features, may be unlike what he was in his lifetime, and yet it may be the more like what he is in heaven now. And after all, if we had come close to him, a real living Saint, should we have

understood him ? If we had lived with St. Basil, might we not have been tempted to look upon him as a peevish invalid, to think him an austere man, or oversensitive, or too methodical, and apt to care about trifles ? Many a holy Abbot must have appeared cross to a lazy monk. We cannot enter into God's Saints upon earth ; even if we stand by their side, we could only make an approximation to the truth, as we do now. This is the case with Saints in scripture. How little has it pleased the Holy Spirit to disclose of their hidden life, just as much of course as we can bear, and as was needful for His Church, and yet how little ! Which of the Saints is there that we can picture vividly to ourselves ? In the case of the blessed Virgin indeed, the Church has marvellously filled up the outline of Scripture ; of her we know one fact, that she was the Mother of God, and the delicate sense, so to speak, of the Christian mind, has found out that this must necessarily involve much more than appears on the surface of Scripture. The Church has so long dwelt in love on our ever-blessed Lord in His infancy, that we almost fancy that we can "come into the house and see the young child with Mary His mother." This may also be the case with St. Paul, who has left so completely the impress of his mind, on his writings, but it is hardly so with any other Saint. St. Mary may be said to live in Christian doctrine ; St. Paul in the Holy Scriptures ; but the other great Saints connected with our Lord have their life in Christian tradition. Even St. John we think of, not as the old man with the golden mitre, but as ever young and beautiful as we have been used to see him in ecclesiastical pictures and sculptures.

All this may perhaps reconcile us to much that is

disappointing from the paucity of materials in the life of Aelred. And yet his life is such an important one, from his being the Cistercian Saint of England, a sort of English St. Bernard, as he is called by his contemporaries, that he seems to deserve that every effort should be made to put forward the little that is known with due prominence. All that can now be done is to interpret the few facts that remain by making him, what he really was, the representative of the internal system of the Cistercian order in England. Facts taken by themselves prove nothing, and to suppose that any real knowledge of by-gone times can be obtained from the bare enumeration of them, is the same error as it would be to suppose that all our knowledge comes to us from experience. Without the light thrown upon them by the cross, the events of the world are the mere stirrings of the sick and disordered life of humanity ; even the lives of Saints are the mere developments of a highly moral man, as the actions of a hero are the development of a great man. If a Christian theory does not interpret the lives of Saints, a Pantheistic one will come in its stead. So we will attempt to show what Aelred was, by showing in what relation the system of which he was the head stood to the world and to the church of the period. As in the life of St. Stephen the external life of the Cistercians was described, so we will attempt now to show what was their inward life, and to bring it out in contrast, not only with the troubled world around, but with that of the leading ecclesiastics of the time. It will then be seen how the cloister was the remedy provided by God for keeping up the contemplative life amidst the busy and distracting scenes in which ecclesiastics were obliged to take part. It is easy to do this

in the case of Aelred, because we have a most complete insight into his religious character from his writings ; and because as he himself is the historian of much that is related, we are only endeavouring to look upon the troubled scene without the cloister as he did himself. And all this it is hoped may reconcile us to the scantiness of facts about himself, and also to the long digressions which such a plan involves ; for it is impossible to give an idea of the work in which he was engaged without pointing out what were the wants of the Church of the period. Besides which we cannot gain a correct view of the middle ages from the lives of Saints alone. They had their good and bad points, like other ages ; and in order to understand the twelfth century, the world and the cloister must be shown in opposition. Thus, though the cloister of Rievaulx will be the central point of the whole, the reader will not be surprised to find himself sometimes on the banks of the Rhine, or beyond the Alps, or to hear the din of border warfare breaking on the peace of the monastery. Though from the fewness of materials, we only catch glimpses of Aelred at intervals, still we will do our best to draw a truthful picture of him, at once the Saint of England and of Scotland, once well known from the Frith of Forth to the banks of the Tyne and the Tees, the man of peace in the midst of barbarian war.

### *The Old Monastery.*

In the beginning of the reign of Henry I. the ancient monastery of Hexham was in a miserable state. Its three Churches were in ruins, and the vast



monastic buildings were desolate ; for ever since the Danes had sacked and plundered it, there had been no monks to dwell there.<sup>1</sup> One chaplain alone, a married priest, lived there with his family, a careless and indifferent man, with one strong feeling in his soul, and that was a love of the old royal line of England, and a hatred of the Normans. The circumstances which led to his dwelling thus with his children, in the midst of the ruinous Abbey buildings, make up a long tale of mingled good and evil. He was apparently one of a priestly race ; for his grandfather and father were priests before him. His grandfather, Alured, the son of Weston, was a good and a learned man. He used to go about through the North, repairing the ancient places which the devastation caused by the Danes had laid waste. One day, there came to him a man who dwelt at Hexham. He told him that an old man dressed in pontifical garments had appeared to him in a dream, and had bidden him go to Alured, and command him to come to Hexham, and search for the relics of the Saints which were buried there. Alured bethought himself awhile, whether this dream were worth attending to ; but he looked at the man who had brought him the news, and felt that they were true. He was a plain man, one of the inferior nobility of the realm,<sup>2</sup> and one who had had in his

<sup>1</sup> Post desolationem Nordhymbrorum quam, irruentibus in Angliam Danis, miserabiliter incurrit, sicut cætera hujus ecclesiæ, hæc Hagulstadensis, ut verbis propheticis utar, multo tempore sine sacerdote, sine ephod, sine teraphim gemebunda resedit. Quicquid de lignis fuerat, ignis absumpsit, bibliotheca illa nobilissima quam præsul sanctus condiderat tota deperiit. MS. Bodl.

<sup>2</sup> Vir quidam de minoris ordinis proceribus. Ibid.

rough life far more to do with the lance than with the psalter. He thought, therefore, that he might be trusted, and went with him to Hexham. They travelled through St. Cuthbert's domain, and came to Tynedale, a wasted and depopulated country, and when they came to Hexham, the miserable inhabitants of the place gathered about them, to see what they were doing amongst the ruins. When they heard their errand, the poor people caught their enthusiasm, and brought spades, and set to work to help them. From dawn of day they searched till mid-day came, and they found nothing ; they searched as men look for treasure, for the names of Acca and Eata, the ancient Saints of Hexham, whose bodies they hoped to find, were known as household words in the hut of every peasant of Northumberland. They who have no friends on earth, naturally look about them for friends in heaven, and in the midst of their wasted and depopulated fields, they bethought themselves of those who originally reclaimed the country from heathenism. And now they worked on, for they hoped to see before evening fell, and to touch, their sacred relies ; but the day was far advanced, and they had found nothing, and in their disappointment they began to laugh at Alured, for having come all the way from Durham on a fool's errand. But his enthusiasm did not cool, and he rose up, and taking a mattock, went to the porch of the Church, and struck it deep into the ground, saying that there were the holy Bishops buried. So the people set to work again, and by and bye they came to two stone coffins, and there lay the bodies of the Saints, waiting for a blessed resurrection, clad in their pontifical robes, which time had not impaired. And all that night they watched about

them with chanting and prayer, and the next day they placed them in a shrine on the south side of the Church, near the sacristy. Time went on, and the Conqueror ruled in England, and another storm of war had depopulated Tynedale. Other lords possessed the land, who had never heard of the holy Bishops of Hexham. But cruel as was the rule of the new possessors of the soil, yet they brought reformation with them. The Norman Bishop of Durham, William of St. Carilefe, loved not the lazy canons, who, without submitting to any rule whatever, lived on the broad lands which stretched from the Tine to the Tees. They were but poor representatives of St. Cuthbert, those thriftless canons, and it was well to remove them. They had the option of becoming monks if they pleased, and provision was made for them if they chose still to be secular.<sup>1</sup> One alone, the dean, was persuaded by his son, a monk, to remain and take the vows ; the others all remained in the world. There was one among them who disdained to receive anything at Norman hands, and this was the son of Alured. The royal family of England was in exile ; English prelates and abbots were compelled to make room for foreigners ; he himself and his brethren were

<sup>1</sup> Successit Walchero Guillelmus habitu monachus, qui clericos ab ecclesia Dunelmensi eliminans monachos subrogavit, et aliis quidem possessiones extra ecclesiam ordinavit, alios id suscipere contemnentes expellere non cunctavit. Intra quos prædicti Aluredi filius qui cæteris præerat, cum nihil ab episcopo suscipere dignaretur, adiit venerabilem archiepiscopum Thomam qui primus Normannorum rexit ecclesiam Eboracensem rogans ut ei Hagulstudensem ecclesiam daret ædificandam.—It does not appear what “qui præerat” means, for the dean became a monk of the new monastery. *Simcon Dunelm. b. iv. 3.*

turned out of their house at Durham, and he disdained to be a pensioner of the stranger. So he bethought himself of Hexham, the seat of the old Saxon bishops, and went there to hide his head till better times came. And, indeed, there were rumours of war in the North, and the king of Scotland might still make a fight for St. Edward's line, though Edgar the Atheling had submitted to the Conqueror, and was soon to assume the cross under Robert, William's eldest son. So away went Eillan, for such was his name, to Hexham. The Bishop, who seems to have been indulgent to the refractory canons, gave him his sanction, though, indeed, Eillan need have been in no dread of a rival, for his new dwelling was a sad scene of desolation. The country around was still bleeding from the vengeance of the Conqueror and the Scot, and in the midst of the deserted fields arose the ruined Abbey itself.<sup>1</sup> Its Church was half unroofed, and the rain and the snow forced a ready entrance through the gaps in the tiles; the tessellated pavement was in many places torn up, the windows were dashed in, and the high columns were covered with green moss, and with damp, which was rapidly eating away the frescoes on the walls, and on the arch which divided the nave from the choir.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Veniens ad locum homo invenit omnia desolata, muros ecclesiæ sine tegmine sordere feno, silvis supererescensibus horrere, litura imbris et tempestate dejecta, nihil pristini retinuisse decoris. Erat autem talis terræ illius desolatio ut fere biennio ex solo venatu et aucupio se sum, que familiam sustineret.* So well was the remembrance of the family kept at Hexham, that there was not long ago, and may be still, a street in Hexham called Eilan's street.

<sup>2</sup> *Arcum sanctuarii historiis et imaginibus et variis cælaturarum figuris—deeoravit.* Rich. Haglust. de statu eccl. c. 3.

Amidst these ruins lived the family of the Saxon priest ; the Abbey lands were amply sufficient for their maintenance, but there were no corn-fields around, and no vassals to till them ; so they lived on hunting and hawking for two years after their arrival, and in the thick woods around them, many a wild deer was aroused by the horns and the hounds of the Saxons. Not long after they came there, the Abbey lands were given to a Norman, by Gerard, Archbishop of York, and this of course did not make Eillan love the strangers a whit more. He was allowed to continue there as chaplain, and a large part of the proceeds still came to him. After his death, his son, also called Eillan, the priest whom we have seen at Hexham, succeeded his father. He found himself heir to the ruined Abbey, and he inherited too the feelings and prejudices of his family, the love for Hexham and its Saints, and for the old royal line of England, and probably, no great good-will to the Norman rulers, ecclesiastical or civil. But it is said of him that he was “a sinner, and that he lived as he ought not to have done.”<sup>1</sup> What this means is not known, but it is probable that he was of the jovial race of hunting priests, who knew more about the winding of horns and the cheering of hounds than about Gregorian chants ; for these unsacerdotal accomplishments were but too common among the Saxon clergy of the time. This was

<sup>1</sup> Qui, licet peccator secus quam oportuit vixerit—ecclesias, tamen Christi renovandas ornandas serviendas devotum se et sollicitum exhibebat.—MS. Bodl. From the same manuscript it appears, in the dedication of his life of St. Bridget, that Lawrence, Abbot of Westminster, knew Eillan, and received from him the original life, which being “semi-barbara,” he polished up and made “Latinissima.”

not a promising character for the father of a Saint, and yet Eillan had three sons, one of whom was Aelred,<sup>1</sup> and a daughter, who became a holy recluse.

The present is not the first time in the annals of England that her monastic system has been extinct ; at least it was so in the north at the period of which we write ; and in the south the spirit of monks seems to have well-nigh disappeared, though there were still vast Abbeys, flourishing in worldly wealth. But their Abbots were often men frank-hearted and generous, yet with far more of the noble lord about them than of the churchman. A type of them was the high-spirited Abbot of St. Alban's, who disdained to submit to the Conqueror, and left his Abbey for the fastnesses of Ely, where Hereward was still fighting for the old royal line of England. In the North, however, monastic life was fairly extinct, and if by chance a stray monk, in the black Benedictine habit, was seen north of the Humber, men stared at his cowl and shaven crown as they would at the strange dress of a foreigner.<sup>2</sup> Aelred, then, was born amid the very ruins of the ancient monasticism of the North. Instead of the green banks where grew primroses and violets, the first place where his little feet would naturally take him, would be the ruined nave of the old church, with its mysterious side chapels ; and there were beautiful faces of Saints peering out upon him, amidst the damp green moss which

<sup>1</sup> The common date for the birth of St. Aelred is 1109. The evidence of this depends on the date assigned for his death in the life of him, given in the Bollandists, which says that he died in 1166, in his fifty-seventh year.

<sup>2</sup> Simeon Dunelm. in. ann. 1074.

was struggling with the bright colours of the frescoes. And he would first hear of St. Wilfrid, the founder of Hexham, though his relics were far away at Canterbury, for it was he who traced the pictures on the walls, to instruct the barbarous people whom he had to teach.<sup>1</sup> He would hear, too, of Aeca, the successor of St. Wilfrid, the friend of Bede, for though his name was almost forgotten in the ecclesiastical calendar, the peasants knew his shrine, and every little child could tell where the relics of the holy Bishop lay.<sup>2</sup> His first play-ground would be the ruined cloisters of the Abbey, where the crosses still marked the graves of the old monks. And the stories which he heard were of the good St. Edward, with tales of King Alfred's wars and of Edmund Ironside.

He was not many years old when a change took place at Hexham, which took away some portion of its desolateness. His father had a brother, a religious and devout man, who was grieved at seeing the possessions of the church thus turned into a family inheritance, and by his persuasion, Eillan was induced to apply to the Archbishop of York for some canons to serve as a germ for the future restoration of the community. Conscious as he was of his own disorderly life, he still loved the Abbey, and had done his best to clear away the rubbish from the Church, and to repair the most

<sup>1</sup> Verum ubi eam beatissimus præsul Wilfridus, adductis secum ex partibus transmarinis artificibus, miro lapideo tabulatu ut in præsentiæ cernitis, renovavit, et ad devotionem rudis adhuc plebis conciliandam picturis et cælaturis multifariam decoravit. MS. Bodl.

<sup>2</sup> Nam ante translationem multis annis cum adhuc puerulus essem Accam, Alchmundum, Fredenbertum, Tilbertum ibi simul requiescere nihil hæsitans populus totus clamabat. Ibid.

ruined portions. It was probably connected in his mind with the old glories of England ; there is a strange connexion between loyalty for an exiled royal family and religion. The devotional feeling is often merely hereditary as well as the loyalty ; yet it is true that the party of a dethroned monarch is generally also that of religion. In this way, probably, did Eillan love Hexham and wish for its restoration ; still his disinterestedness did not carry him so far as to give up one jot of his personal rights over the Abbey lands. So poor were the canons that they often found it very hard to live on the poor remnant of their property ;<sup>1</sup> and yet Eillan showed no inclination whatever to better their condition. However the canons were there, and Aelred could not wander about the old Abbey-buildings without seeing them, and hearing them chant the service. Monks and monkish men are always good friends with children, and doubtless the fair-haired Saxon boy soon made their acquaintance. He was a happy boy, running wherever he pleased about the old Church and Abbey ; and it may have been the remembrance of his curious old home on the banks of the Tyne, and of his holy childhood, which made him dwell with peculiar joy on the infancy and childhood of our blessed Lord, in after-times, when, after many a hard struggle, he had gained another home, even more peaceful and secluded. Strange, indeed, it is, when by dint of fighting and hard blows we have been moulded into that character which in substance is to be ours for all eternity, to look back upon the time of our malle-

<sup>1</sup> Curam parochiæ cum maxima parte beneficiorum—de ipsis canonicis longo tempore tenuit.—Richard of Hexham, de stat. eccl. Hag. 2. 8.



able and plastic childhood. How little often can we remember of it! A mazy dream of sicknesses, and pains all coloured by the scenes in which our lot was cast, the sounding sea or the watery meadows, or the high mountains.

So small a portion of Aelred's life was spent there, that his chroniclers have forgotten it. An obscure charter found in Richard of Hexham incidentally preserves the memory of it. And yet these years of his childhood had much influence on his future life; the chant of the canons remained as an undersong amidst all the festivities and the tournaments of a king's court; for this is the next scene in which we find him.<sup>1</sup> When he quitted his home at Hexham, Aelred became the playmate of a prince's son. David, the brother of Alexander, king of Scotland, and heir apparent to the throne, took him into his family and brought him up with his son Henry. David had left his country in early life, and had preferred the court of his brother-in-law, Henry I. of England, to the chance of succeeding to the turbulent throne of Scotland. He had married the daughter of earl Waltheof, who had fallen a victim to the resentment of the Conqueror, and who was regarded as a martyr of the Saxon cause. His mother was Saint Margaret, the sister of Edgar Atheling. Add to which, besides the two earldoms which he possessed, Huntingdon and Northampton, he had also a claim upon Northumberland<sup>2</sup> in right of his wife, who was

<sup>1</sup> "Ab ipsis incunabilis," says Aelred, "cum Henrico vixi." De gen. Reg. Angl. ap. Twysden, vol. i. 368.

<sup>2</sup> David claimed Northumberland for his son Henry on this ground. Fordun, v. 42.

descended from the old earls of the county. He would thus be naturally brought to Hexham, the spiritual capital of Northumberland ; and its staunch old Saxon priest would be sure to attract the notice of a descendant of Saint Margaret. Another circumstance would draw him towards the little Aelred ; his first child had perished in his infancy by a terrible accident,<sup>1</sup> and Henry, his son, was left without a companion, for David never had any other male children. The beauty of the Saxon boy struck him, and he determined to bring him up with his son, for his daughters, Clarice and Hodierna, could be no mates for the high-spirited boy, who in after life was called Henry the heroic. Henry was a devout and good prince, and even when he grew older and was a soldier in the camp, was said to be like a young monk. But there was another boy of more congenial tastes to Aelred, and that was Waltheof, the son of David's queen by her former husband ; but of him more by and bye.

---

### *The Reformation in Scotland.*

#### CHAPTER II.

WHO could have in the whole world better prospects than Aelred ? The courts of England and Scotland were opening upon him ; a rich heiress with a noble fief, or, if he preferred the church, a mitred abbacy would have been reasonable objects of a laudable ambition. But here we must pause and while Aelred is

<sup>1</sup> Orderic Vital. Ecc. Hist. 8. in ann. 1092.

growing up in David's family, take a look at the state of politics in the north. The kingdom of Scotland, I had almost said the church, was in process of formation. It was Aelred's destiny to be thrown among the ruins of a state of things passed away ; by and bye he will assist in the raising up of a new system ; but we must first learn what were the wild and unruly elements among which his lot was cast. Alas ! for Scotland. How was it ever to become like a Christian kingdom ? Its hierarchy was as yet unformed ; it had been cast out of the stream of European civilization, and its communications with the Christian world were but few and far between. The sixth century is a long way off from the twelfth ; and it was in that early time that a voice was heard going through the western isles and the wild coasts of Argyle, proclaiming peace on earth, good-will towards men. The good news spread across to the mainland, from Oban, down by the banks of Loch Awe, even to the wild head-land of Cantyre ; and the savage people were turned to the faith of Christ. It was then that in the north arose Iona, or Icolmkill, Columba's cell, and the kings of Norway, of Scotland, and of the Isles, chose to lie around the shrine of St. Columba, while in the south among the Picts, St. Ninian had founded Whiterne. Still it is quite true that Christianity never seized upon the hearts of the people as it did in the south ; it was a hard task indeed to penetrate through all the wild glens, the winding lakes, and the forests of pine which lie among those savage mountains, but this it did accomplish ; what it did not do was to bend the stubborn heart, the rough and disputatious temper of the men. There was something forbidding in the original Scottish monks : they did not

seize on the hearts of the people. They never succeeded in extinguishing hatred between rival races, and while England was one kingdom at the Norman conquest, Scotland had not even a right to one name ; it was Pictland as well as Scotland, and there was in the north beyond the Grampians, still the Gael, the wild and untamed savage of the north. Scotland was really only Argyleshire and the Isles ; the country beneath, from the two Friths, that is, the Lothians and Strathclyde, belonged to England ; while Galloway, with its savage Picts, was a debateable land, ground down between both. Christianity had not drawn together the hearts of the savage chieftains ; and what was worse, it had not succeeded in purifying their vices ; among no nation, calling itself Christian, was the sanctity of marriage so little respected as among the Picts and Scots.<sup>1</sup>

Alas ! for Scotland. By the time of the Norman Conquest, the work of St. Columba and St. Ninian was undone. Whiterne had no bishop ; he had long ago been driven away in some of the cruel and constant wars which raged in the country. In Scotland, the bishopric of St. Andrew's was still standing. But all was in a miserable state ; there too monasticism had disappeared ; the far-famed Culdees were a set of degenerate priests ; they had given up their original rule, and had wives and children ; and it is said of them that they hardly ever celebrated mass at St. Andrew's altar, except when the king came to see them.<sup>2</sup> In this state of things, it was well for Scotland that, by God's will, its kings became feudal vassals of England. Feudalism, instead of being as has been

<sup>1</sup> See St. Aelred's Life in the Bollandists.

<sup>2</sup> Pinkerton, Enquiry, Appendix, p. 462.

supposed, the partition of a territory, among many lords, was in reality the binding of a number of disjointed communities into one. The independent patriarchal chieftain who did homage to his conqueror and received back his lands from him, was bound on pain of forfeiting them, to assist his suzerain whenever he required his services ; and the feudal head thus became the centre of a number of before disjointed hordes.<sup>1</sup> But feudalism also contained another principle, and that was, that within his own territory each lord was absolute ; his suzerain could not interfere with his jurisdiction ; *infangthief* and *outfangthief* implied a very perfect and intelligible power of hanging and imprisoning as he pleased. This of course varied with the real power of the suzerain : in proportion as he was strong, his vassals were less independent ; thus, for instance, the great vassals of the French king were much more like independent chieftains than an English earl under the Conqueror or Henry II. In the case of Scotland, the king, while he became the vassal of the English crown, strengthened his authority at home. He became himself a feudal superior over his people, instead of a patriarchal chieftain with limited powers. Besides which the English king made him the feudal lord of Cumbria, which included not only the modern shires of Renfrew and Lanark, but “merry Carlisle” also, and the whole of Cumberland, to be held as a fief from himself. And the very dependent relation in which he placed himself was perhaps more useful to himself

<sup>1</sup> Those who know Sir Francis Palgrave’s great work on the Anglo-Saxon Constitution, will see at once how much the author is indebted to him for pointing out the relation which existed between England and Scotland, and throughout this chapter.

and his people in another way. It made him a portion of the great European body, and brought them into contact with the rest of Christendom.

The Norman Conquest indirectly still further improved Scotland. Malcolm Canmore, an intelligent and upright prince, was then on the throne. He had been driven into exile by Macbeth, the murderer of his father, and had lived for fourteen years in king Edward's court; here he had learned a lesson which he did not forget when he returned to his own wild and troubled home in the north. He had learned what was the meaning of a feudal king, not only the leader in war of a savage horde, with whom he was the common proprietor of a certain number of streams and mountains, but the lord of the soil, the dispenser of justice, according to determinate forms. He had had before him also a model of devotion, chastity, and justice in the saintly Edward. He had seen also there Margaret, a Saxon maiden, then a child of ten years old, and the neice of the Confessor, in whose veins flowed the blood of the royal house of England, and the imperial line of Germany;<sup>1</sup> and when he came back to his desolate palace of Dunfermline, surrounded by wars abroad and treachery within, he still thought of the holy family which he had seen in his exile at Westminster. After many years news came to Scot-

<sup>1</sup> Malcolm was fourteen years in Edward's court; he left it at the latter end of the year 1056, the very year in which Margaret came back from Hungary. Comp. Fordun, lib. v. c. 7, 11, 16. Orderic, as Sir F. Palgrave has observed, says that St. Edward betrothed Margaret to Malcolm. This appears inconsistent however with Turgot's narrative, if Fordun gives it rightly; for he seems to imply that Edgar betrothed his sister to Malcolm.

land that St. Edward was dead, and that Harold had seized on the throne ; and next that a great battle had been fought, and that the Normans ruled in England. Malcolm at once armed his powers in favour of Edgar, and of the line of St. Edward ; but the Conqueror was too strong for him, and his country was invaded, and he himself compelled to submit. What in the meanwhile was become of Margaret ? One day, Malcolm was sitting in his palace of Dunfermline ; the wind had been blowing fiercely, and news was brought him that a large ship had been driven by stress of weather into the bay. He sent down to the shore some of his nobles to see where the strange ship had come from ; then they brought him word that they had seen a man of princely bearing disembark with two maidens, one taller than the other, and of surpassing beauty. Malcolm sent for them, and found to his joy that they were the exiled family of England, whom God had thus directed to his land: Poor Margaret ! she had looked with terror at the high mountains and rugged rocks of the land on which they had been cast, and with still more terror at the wild looks of the nobles, who had come to gaze upon them ; but she now thanked God who sent to them a protector who loved the memory of St. Edward. Not long after, Malcolm begged of Edgar to bestow upon him the hand of his sister, and Margaret became queen of Scotland. It was by God's good providence that the line of St. Edward was planted afresh in Scotland ; it was providential too that Margaret was chosen at this special time to be queen of Scotland, for it was a turning-point in the history of the country, and Margaret became its reformer.

What could a poor foreign maiden do on such a

throne ? amidst a court, where the utmost depravity prevailed, and the wild nobles swore unchristian oaths in the presence of their queen. The very loneliness, and the distance from her country, was enough to appal the heart of a maiden ; and the rude rafters and comfortless halls, and the windy passages of an old northern palace, were in themselves sufficient to weigh down with its gloom the heart of a female, brought up in the palace of Westminster. What then could Margaret do ? with what sceptre could she sway her unruly court ? and yet she did reform Scotland, and that too, church and state. And if any one asks how she could do this, I will tell him how another queen did not do it. There once came to Scotland, from a foreign court, a queen, like Margaret, of surpassing beauty, of strong affections, and of a cheerful disposition, loving to make all happy about her. But with all her advantages, Mary did not win the hearts of the people, nor reform the wickedness of her nobles, and her reign ruined all that was left of the Church. It is only when, after long years of penitence, she died on the scaffold, confessing her faith, that we can look with complacency on Mary. But the strength of Margaret lay in her being a saint. It is true she was what is called a clever woman ; she knew Latin, and rejoiced in conversing with the learned men of the realm. But cleverness is not enough to effect a reform in a barbarous nation. She had that indescribable tact by which saints know how to manage those about them, and to do almost unconsciously just what they ought. A cold dignity might have awed, but could not have won over the nobles of her unruly court. But Margaret had a well-spring of quiet happiness in her heart which made her smile on all around her. Her



happy cheerfulness was like the purple light which throws a warm tint on the cold mountain snow. In her saintly uprightness she could afford to be amiable without losing her dignity ; and no one durst venture before her on an evil jest, for she had a strange power in her presence which rendered it impossible. The refractory warriors who frequented her husband's table would not wait till grace was said, and she won them to submission by sending round a cup of choice wine to be given to those who remained, and it was still in after-times called the grace-cup, or St. Margaret's cup. Her character had so endeared her to her husband, that she possessed an unbounded influence over him. His was no weak and easily compliant mind, and yet she converted him to habits of devotion and piety, which were rare indeed among the wild warriors of the twelfth century. He allowed her as much money as she would to distribute among the poor, and with his own royal hands helped her every day to feed the multitudes whom she served within the palace. With her he washed the feet of the poor ; nay, so completely did he allow her to give herself up to the boundless love of Christ's poor ones that continually welled from her heart, that he permitted her to bring impure lepers into their common chamber and kiss their sores. He knew well that it was no weak or fanatical devotion which made her do so, but a love for her Lord, and an intense realization of His oneness with His suffering members. Sometimes she would pretend to steal from the royal treasury what she distributed to the poor, for she knew well that her playful theft pleased her husband ; and Malcolm would take her by the wrist, with her hand thus full of gold, and bring her to her confessor, and ask him if she were

not a little thief caught in the very act, who deserved to be well punished. He would take up the books in which she read, and kiss them in fond devotion ; sometimes he would carry them away, and have them beautifully illuminated with figures of saints and golden letters ; he would cover them with gold and jewels, and bring them back to her with joyful triumph.

Her gentle influence was exerted in improving the taste, and refining the manners of Scottish females ; the most terrible licentiousness reigned in the kingdom, but she was like a light from heaven, a type of all purity to her subjects, and her example purified the land. She had ever about her a number of noble maidens, whom she brought up within the palace, and there wrought rich palls for the altar, and magnificent vestments of all sorts for the service of the Church. To purify and refine their taste, she encouraged merchants to come to the kingdom, and of them she bought the richest wares, gold and silver vases, and jewels of price. Into this her little court where she sat with her maidens at work, she admitted none of the nobles but those of whom she had a good opinion ; and she was herself the life and the centre of the circle.

But one thing Margaret did, which Popes and Councils had found a hard matter, and that was, to bring the Church to a uniformity with the rest of Christendom. Strangely indeed had the old tendencies of the Scotch Church developed. Three centuries had passed since the monks of Iona had submitted to be like the rest of Christendom ; but these had been centuries of weakness and of sleep, and when the voice of St. Gregory VII. called men out of their sleep, each

Church had to consider what evils it had to reform.<sup>1</sup> Feudalism had created national Churches and striven to cut off the communication between the parts of Christendom, and this even where it falls short of actual schism is sure to weaken the healthy action of the whole. Scotland had had no feudalism, and therefore it had no prince-bishops, no high baronial abbots, and no simony. But the old sour and sullen spirit had come out, and the developments of the nationality of Scotland were curious. They had given up their old way of keeping Easter, but they had taken up a wrong method of keeping Lent. Instead of beginning on Ash-Wednesday, they put off the fast till the Monday after. Besides which, with a sort of northern Jansenism, they excluded sinners from the Holy Communion on Easter-day, even those whom after confession and penitence, the Church would have received. Lastly, they used in the administration of mass, certain superstitious rites, unknown to the Catholic Church.

It was a strange sight, that assembly in which Margaret, with her husband for an interpreter, argued these points with the Scotch, who certainly have ever shown a singular immobility in religious matters, both of practice and of faith. It was hardly the province of a woman ; it was private judgment, and yet Margaret had that strange way of arriving at conclusions without premises, that unreasoning logic, by which the female mind arrives at what is right by an unconscious process. She

<sup>1</sup> The Scotch appear never to have been treated as schismatics by the Holy See, notwithstanding their different mode of celebrating Easter, which was not that condemned in the Council of Nice. v. Baronius, in ann. 634.

had the Catholic church on her side, and it did not require any deep abstract views to tell her that the Scotch were wrong. The natural rectitude of a Christian heart would tell her, when the Lenten fast came round, that it was an unnatural thing to be keeping carnival when the brethren in other lands were fasting and mourning. Brethren and sisters love to be together at Christmas, and when any member of a family is carried to the grave, terrible as is the grief, all like to share it together, and to accompany the beloved body to the tomb. The Christian world is one family, and when the bells in England rang out an Ash-Wednesday sound, Margaret would not have them rung with a merry chime in Scotland; as well might a sister dance while her brother is in mourning. Thus, the strangely Catholic instinct of the Christian heart would alone guide Margaret, without any profound abstract views of unity and uniformity. Cold and dead does reasoning fall upon the soul, in comparison with this yearning for oneness, of the same nature, as the love of brethren and sisters, though tenfold stronger. In such cases private judgment may be safely left to itself, and becomes infallible; and so Margaret felt that she could not err, though she were teaching the doctors of the church of her nation. And so again with respect to Paschal communion, one who had herself received the Body of her Lord at Easter would feel it strange that any one who was not actually excommunicated should be banished from the altar at that holy time; and when the Clergy urged those fearful words of St. Paul against those who receive unworthily, "All are unworthy in one sense," answered the queen, "but they who for many days before have done penance after confessing their sins on Easter-day, coming to the table of the Lord in the Catho-

lic faith, receive the flesh and blood of the immaculate Lamb, not to judgment, but to the remission of sins." Three things more she obtained from the council, the abolition of superstitious rites at the holy sacrifice of the mass, the observance of the Sunday, which had fallen into disuse in the realm, and certain canons against unlawful marriages. The high spirited Scot, in his enthusiastic love for her goodness, gave up to her gentle persuasion what the authority of their king could not have extorted by force, and what they would never have yielded to the arguments of the Saxon priests.

And now it may well be asked what was the hidden life of Margaret. This cheerful queen, who walked abroad clad in gold and jewels, could hardly have an ascetic air ; and yet beneath her gorgeous robes was a body chastised by perpetual fasts, and knees hardened by long prayers. She kept a fast of forty days before Christmas, in addition to the fast before Lent ; and during those seasons of penitence she rose before midnight, and spent the hours of darkness in singing psalms. A great part of this time she was often alone, in prayer in the Church, and when the clerks came in to sing their office, they found her there ready to join them. As the day dawned she lay down again for a very short time to refresh her weary body ; and all this while, during these long and wearing fasts, she was going about doing works of active benevolence. Even before her second brief sleep in the morning, she, with Malcolm's help, had washed the feet of six poor people, and given them alms to relieve their wants. And scarcely had she risen again, when nine orphan infants were brought to her ; she stooped down on her knees to feed them ; and none of the details of sops and of baby linen

were beneath her royal care. During the day three hundred poor were relieved by her own hand, and that of the king. She had another care, of which nothing has yet been said, the care of her children, and how she fulfilled this duty the subsequent history of Scotland bears witness. How well she loved them and her royal husband, her death will tell. Neither her austere life and religious exercises, nor, what was much more likely to do it, her gold and jewels, and queenly apparel, had seared her woman's heart. Her husband and her elder sons were in England engaged in the siege of Alnwick, and she herself had long been ailing, and was now very ill. One day her attendants observed that she was sad, an unusual thing with her ; her heart was thinking on her husband and her sons, who were far away over the border, fighting on English ground, and she said to those about her, " Who knows whether some great evil has not happened to the Scottish realm ?" She got daily worse and worse, and her features had already the paleness of death upon them. She had received the last sacrament, and ordered the Black Cross to be brought to her. It was a piece of the true cross, on which was an ivory figure of the Lord crucified, the whole enclosed in a beautiful reliquary of gold.<sup>1</sup> She had brought it over with her from England, and now she wished to die with it in her hands, and when it was found hard to open the case in which it was contained, she exclaimed, " Ah ! wretched sinner ! I am not then worthy to look upon the Holy Cross ;" and when at length it was brought to her, she kissed it, and wept over it, and glued it to her lips, repeating all the while the fifty-first psalm. At this moment her son Alexander entered the

<sup>1</sup> St. Aelred, de Genealog. Twysden i. 349.

room ; she revived on seeing him, and asked him for news about his father and brother. He answered that they were well ; the dying queen, however, guessed the truth by his mournful countenance, and conjured him by the Holy Cross, which she held in her hands, to tell her. He then told her the truth ; his father and his brother had both been killed. Margaret raised her hands to heaven, and said, “All praise be to Thee, everlasting God, who hast made me suffer such agony in my death, as I hope, to the cleansing of some of the stains of my sins.” And soon after this her poor broken heart ceased to beat.

She went to where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest ; and she left behind her war and desolation in Scotland. Scarcely had the breath passed from her body when it was remarked that a sweet bloom had come over the death-like paleness of her face, and her features assumed a beautiful expression of peace. It contrasted strangely with the wild storm which raged around her sacred relics. A party among the Scots hated the rule of Malcolm, as being a favourer of Sassenaghs and foreigners ;<sup>1</sup> the wild Gael loved not the approach of civilization, and a party was already in arms prepared to besiege the castle of Edinburgh, where lay her body. Hurriedly by a postern door her sacred remains were conveyed away, and buried in the Abbey of Dunfermline. The rebels succeeded for a time in expelling her son from the throne. For five years war and rapine ravaged Scotland, and usurpers wore its crown,

<sup>1</sup> Omnes Anglos qui de curia regis extiterunt de Scotia expulerunt—Post hæc eum regnare permiserunt ea ratione ut amplius in Scotia nec Anglos, nec Normannos introduceret. Simon Dunelm, in ann. 1093.

but at length it pleased God to restore Edgar, the eldest surviving son of Margaret, to the throne. He was like his great uncle, St. Edward, a mild and amiable prince, and the weary land had peace in his days. After him came a remarkable prince, Alexander, surnamed the Fierce ; and need he had of fierceness, for he had to rule an unruly kingdom, and by main force to keep in awe his rebellious nobles. But fierce as he was to them, he was mild and beneficent to the Clergy, whom he loved for his sainted mother's sake. They were men of enlightened policy, these kings of Scotland ; they cherished all the learning and goodness which the Norman invasion had drifted from the south. This, however, might have been merely the effect of circumstances ; the Saxon kingdom had stretched to the north as far as the castle of the Maidens, the modern name of which, Edwin's burgh, even now bears witness to the Saxon rule. The policy of the Saxon kings by giving it to be ruled as a fief by the Scottish king had converted a dangerous enemy into a friend, and when the Norman conquest came sweeping before it all that was English, it was natural that the Saxons should retire towards the north, and Sassenagh, the name so long applied to the Lowlander by the Gael, bears witness to the extent of the southern importation. It shows also their contempt for their native kings who had adopted the manners and civilization of the Southron ; and this feeling created the party among the native Scottish nobles, which cost so much trouble to Alexander and his brothers. This would naturally incline the king to those of Saxon blood. But it could be nothing but a sound and Christian policy which prompted them to amalgamate their discordant races by the erection of



new bishoprics.<sup>1</sup> St. Andrew's, for a long time, was the only fixed Scottish See, and its Bishop was called the

<sup>1</sup> Amidst the great confusion attending the ecclesiastical History of Scotland, it is difficult to fix the time of the creation or revival of the sees. The common account given in Buchanan cannot be trusted, for St. Aelred, (*de Genealog. Twysden*, p. 348.) expressly says that David found only three or four sees when he came to the throne. The truth probably is that there were great irregularities, (as appears from the 43rd canon of the second Council of Chalons) and that the sees were for a long time unfixed. It appears that by an unusual regulation, the Abbot and monks of Iona had, not of course the consecration, as has been supposed, of Bishops, but their appointment and mission, v. Thomassin, I, 3, 14, 12. The Bishops thus continued to be like Bishops in partibus without fixed sees. It is difficult to fix the precise time when this state of things ceased. It probably did not cease at once, for in David's time there was an irregular election of a Bishop, which looks like a part of the old system, v. William of Newbridge, i. 23; and as late as 1297, the Culdees made an effort to regain the right of election. It seems, however, likely that Alexander effected the real change by taking the jurisdiction out of the hands of the Culdees, and thus fixing the sees. First, the expulsion of the Culdees from St. Andrew's, and the revival of Glasgow was in his time. The latter event indeed was executed by David, as appears from the inquisition taken by him in Pinkerton; but it was done before he came to the throne, and while he was ruler of Cumbria under his brother, as was usual with the heir apparent to the throne, v. Palgrave, p. 441. Secondly, a passage is quoted in the preface to Twysden, from a manuscript in the Cotton library, which, though it contains mistakes, is too remarkable to have been written without authority. Anno. ab Inc. Domini 1108, ac tempore Regis Malcolmi et S. Margaritæ electus fuit Turgotus, Prior Dunelmensis in Episcopatum St. Andreæ et in diebus illis totum jus Keledeorum per totum regnum Scotiæ transivit in Episcopatum S. Andreæ. Turgot was not made Bishop by Malcolm, but by Alexander; and so it appears that in Alexander's days the jurisdiction over Scotland was taken away from

Bishop of the Scots,<sup>1</sup> as the prelate of Whiterne, as successor of St. Ninian, was the Bishop of the Picts. To this see king Alexander added Glasgow and perhaps also Elgin, or at least he revived them ; and took care to appoint to these sees men of learning and piety. But the throne of a Scottish diocese was by no means an easy seat. Turgot, whom Alexander early in his reign appointed to the see of St. Andrew's, went back to his cloister of Durham, for his heart sunk within him at the difficulties which surrounded him. Eadmer, too, the companion of St. Anselm, was elected to the same see, but the very next year he came back to Canterbury, for it was better to be a simple monk of St. Benedict than to bear the weary crosier of St. Andrew's. Again, John, the new Bishop of Glasgow, fairly ran away to Rome, and from thence to the Holy Land, and could only be brought back but by an express command of the Holy See. One part of their difficulty was doubtless

the Culdees, and transferred to the Bishop of St. Andrew's. The actual erection of St. Andrew's into a metropolitan see was not effected till long afterwards, owing to the opposition of the Archbishop of York ; but the breaking of the power of the Culdees, is in this passage clearly expressed. It is therefore most likely on the whole that the great change is to be referred to him, and not to Malcolm. Caithness and Elgin may have been revived by Malcolm ; yet it is remarkable that the revolt in consequence of which they are said to have been erected, is probably that said by Fordun to have occurred in Alexander's time. The creation of the greater number of the Scottish Sees is owing to David, as St. Aelred says that on his accession to the throne he found three or four sees, but at his death left nine. Two out of these four are known to have been St. Andrew's and Glasgow, the other two were probably Elgin and Caithness.

<sup>1</sup> Pinkerton, Enquiry, Appendix, p. 464.

their difference with the Archbishop of York, who claimed canonical jurisdiction over them, but the chief obstacles lay in their unruly Clergy, the degenerate Culdees. Alexander, however, determined to remedy this evil ; monasticism was reviving in the north of England, and wherever a new monastery was established, or an old one revived, there were the headquarters of religion, and the monks became the instructors of a people, whom the mere pressure of desolation had stupified and brutalized. The example of Durham had given him a precedent for the expulsion of the secularized Culdees, and he substituted regular canons for them at St. Andrew's. He restored to the prior and canons of St. Andrew's the lands which had been taken away from the Church, and the quaint style in which the act of restoration was effected is a specimen of the state of things in Scotland. In the cathedral of St. Andrew's all the nobles of the realm were assembled ; and with them Robert, the newly-elected Bishop, formerly prior of Scone, and the new canons of the convent, their shaven crowns and ecclesiastical habit mingling strangely with the bright armour of the Lowland nobles, and the waving plaid of the chieftains of the Gael. In the midst of this assembly there was led up to the high altar Alexander's Arabian war horse, saddled and bridled, and splendidly caparisoned, with the king's shield fastened to his back, and a silver lance, which afterwards became the shaft of the crucifix of the Church. By this strange charter the lands were delivered to the monks, and the transaction was duly impressed upon the witnesses. Besides which he built the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Scone, the ancient seat of Scottish royalty, and the monastery of St. Columba, in the little island of Inchcolm, in the Frith of Forth ; and any one

who has been on Loch Tay, will remember the green islet where a monastery was erected over the grave of his wife Sibylla.

It was in the year 1124 that Alexander died, shortly after he had conferred the lands on the Church of St. Andrew's. His brother David thus found himself in possession of an unenviable throne, for Alexander died childless.<sup>1</sup> He endeavoured to avoid the dangerous honour ; and indeed he had few temptations to quit the court of England, where he was honoured as the first of English nobles. Henry had loved him for the cheerful and warm-hearted disposition which he had inherited from his sainted mother. He had been knighted by the king's own hand, and was a general favourite with the whole court. He related to Aelred of himself, in after times, that he used to smile at his sister, the good queen Maud, and at the filthy objects whose wants, in her charity, she would herself relieve. But even in the thoughtlessness of his youth, he was preserved from evil, and was already distinguished by his zeal for the Church in that part of Scotland which, as heir-apparent to the crown, was his appanage. And now he shuddered at the task which was imposed upon him. He yielded, however, to the persuasion of the Bishops, and was crowned. It was of the utmost consequence to Henry, that in the event of a disputed succession, which was likely, Scotland should be in the hands of one bound to the line of St. Edward by so many ties ; and he, too, probably urged David to accept the throne. David did not find his kingdom so hard to rule as he had imagined. What his brother,

*Scimus enim regnum non appetivisse sed horruisse, says St. Aelred.*

with all his fierceness, could keep, only at the cost of much labour and blood, he ruled in peace by his meekness and charity.<sup>1</sup> He managed to reconcile, at least to keep in order, the two discordant elements of his kingdom, the old patriarchal chieftains of the plaided clans, and the new nobles which were rising up, the earls and barons of the feudal Lowlands. He was the king, in an especial manner, of the Church and of the poor. A novel personage for Scotland, and one which she had not seen for centuries, meets us at the outset of his reign—a legate of the Holy See. He met the King with the Bishops and Clergy at Roxburgh. In the reign of Malcolm, the queen was the leading figure in the council, and though perfectly justified by circumstances, it was not the usual mode of proceeding, as may well be supposed. David's object was to fix the hierarchy, and to erect a native church, instead of depending on English clergy. To effect the first of these purposes, he more than doubled the number of Bishops; and for the latter object, he erected many monasteries of the Cistercian order, and houses of regular canons. How well he succeeded is evident from the fact, that while contemplation was by no means the line of the old Scottish clergy, some of the distinguished members of the mystic school of St. Victor, at Paris, were Scotchmen. He was in some measure a St. Louis in the twelfth century, and the story of his often returning to his palace at the petition of a poor man, when he had already foot in

<sup>1</sup> Regnum quod frater laboriorissime tenuit, mox ille sine contradictione susceptum, quaquaversum inclinum sibi et quietum tenuit.—Sim. Dunelm. in ann. 1124. St. Aelred calls him the author of the Scottish polity.

stirrup, and the merry horn was calling him to the chase, reminds one of the oak of Vincennes, under which the good Louis sat to give judgment to all who came to him. His brother Alexander's appetite probably was not spoiled when, in his royal justice he hanged a felon ; but David was known to weep on ordering an execution. In another respect was David like the sainted king. The good people, in St. Louis's reign, made jingling rhymes about his love for clerks, and one of David's successors called him a "sair Saint for the crown." And yet James might have had no kingdom to govern, if David had not preceded him ; and doubtless the crown was not the worse for the prayers which monks and nuns offered up in the many abbeys founded by David ; nor were the Scotch less religious because he left nine bishopries where he found but four. If it had not been for the unhappy invasion of England, which will be noticed by and bye, the parallel with St. Louis would have been complete.

---

### CHAPTER III.

#### *The Struggle.*

WE left Aelred in his boyhood, the playfellow of Henry, the son of David, Earl of Huntingdon, and we must now be content to find him a youth in the palace of David, king of Scotland. Splendid was the prospect which opened upon him. In a new and flourishing kingdom just about to take its place among the nations of Europe, the favourite of its king, he might have become the first of its nobles. Aelred's family

is said to have been noble,<sup>1</sup> though, from the present situation of his father, it must have been decayed ; and even if he had been base-born, the earldoms and fiefs of this period were not so restricted to men of noble blood but that a poor adventurer might hope to obtain them. It is true, that in most cases the feudal lord would be coincident with the patriarchal chief ; but in England, especially, precedents might be found where the poor knight became an earl, rich in broad lands and in vassals.<sup>2</sup> Society was forming itself anew, and a new nobility was arising in England and Scotland ; and if Aelred had had the warlike taste of Henry, his companion, he might have fought his way to be the head of the Scottish chivalry. But his gentle and retiring spirit led him to books and study, and Aelred followed the example of Waltheof, in preferring his books to tilts and tournaments. Here, too, if he had but been ambitious, a fine field lay before him. He was a man of learning rare in those times. In his boyhood, he had read Cicero and Terence,<sup>3</sup> and those authors quoted by chance in his works, are but specimens of his acquirements in classical learning. He knew the Latin Fathers too, and sundry allusions to genus and species show in him the rising schoolman, to whom the mysteries of the trivium and quadrivium were

<sup>1</sup> Joseelin. Vita St. Waltheni. ap. Bolland. Aug. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking of Henry I.'s favourites, the author of *Gesta Stephani* says, *quique regno nobiliores gloriam eorum et pompam, ægre ferebant, utpote qui ex imo creati genere se multo nobiliores et divitiis excederent et dominio superarent.* Duchesne. Script. Norm. 932. v. also 966. He also talks of landless nobles, p. 956. As for Scotland, there are said to have been no earls or barons before Malcolm Canmore's time.

<sup>3</sup> De spirit. am. lib. iii. p. 469, ed. Gibbons.

familiar.<sup>1</sup> He left school at an early age, but he still continued his studies at court. He might have led, if he had pleased, the march of intellect, as it may be called, in Scotland, and it would have been hard if a mitre and crosier had not fallen to his share.<sup>2</sup> But never was a soul less ambitious than Aelred's. From his boyhood, his sole ambition was concentrated in loving and being loved; his text-book was Cicero on Friendship, which he read with avidity, and endeavoured to carry out in real life.<sup>3</sup> He read romances too, for he knew that story which in after-days he characterized as "a vain tale concerning one Arthur."<sup>4</sup> The friendship however of David and Jonathan in Scripture, affected him more than all the feats of the Round Table, and the love of Queen Guenever to boot. In the legends of Christian Martyrs, he wept with tears of tenderness over the devoted friendship of the Christian soldier who saved the virgin of Antioch out of the place of shame, and afterwards shared her crown of martyrdom.<sup>5</sup> He went about the world seeking for objects on which to expend his affection, and feeling pained if his love met with no return.

<sup>1</sup> *Post scholas præponere relictas. Joseel. Sed proprio sudore et ingenii subtilis sibi innati exercitio expolitus supra multos literis sæcularibus imbutos.*—*Ibid.* Laurence, Abbot of Westminster, in the preface to the Life of St. Bridget before quoted, speaks of his *cura literarum in curia regis.*

<sup>2</sup> *Tanto amore a Scotorum Rege complexus est ut ad episcopum eum promovisset nisi ad Cisterciensem ordinem advo-lasset.*—*Vita St. Aelred. ap. Boll.*

<sup>3</sup> *Cum adhuc puer essem in scholis tota se mea mens dedit affectui et devovit amori ut mihi nihil dulcius quam amari et amare videretur.*—*De Spirit. Ami. Prolog.*

<sup>4</sup> *Spec. Char. 2. 17.*

<sup>5</sup> *De Spirit. Anni. i. p. 435.*



But this was a case which could not often happen ; for he was too amiable not to be loved by all the world. He lived far from his home, and very little is told of his family ; his mother's name is not once mentioned, but this was made up to him by the love of all about him. He was one of those who, by the smiling faces which ever meet them, feel sure that their presence is always welcome.<sup>1</sup> In the banquetting hall, while the merry jest was going round, his quick wit and ready speech made him an acquisition, while from his guileless unaffectedness no one felt his inferiority. Indeed, his guilelessness almost approached to credulity ; and though quick-witted enough to see into the faults of others, yet he seemed to have an universal belief in the goodness of the human heart, which neutralized his cleverness. His high favour raised him enemies ; but even these he won over by his meekness. One of the king's knights, an envious man, hated him for his good fortune, as he deemed it, and one day his hatred broke out, even in the king's presence, and he loaded him with reproachful and insulting words. But Aelred remained unmoved, and said, "Thou art right, sir knight, and hast spoken right well ; what thou sayest is truth, and I see thou art a true friend of mine." The rude soldier immediately begged his pardon, and swore that he would do his best to serve him. "I am glad of thy penitence, said Aelred, and I love thee the more because by thy hatred I have advanced in love to God." This sweet temper could not fail to bring him friends, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Erat vir optime morigeratus, facetus, facundus, socialis et jocundus. Joscelin. Vid. also his account of himself, Spec. Chari. i. 28, where he seems to point to something of the sort.*

king above all loved him. He used to tell him family stories about the courage of his father, King Malcolm, and the goodness of his sister Matilda, the queen of England.<sup>1</sup> He gave him the stewardship of his household, a high office, which afterwards gave its name to the royal family of England and Scotland, and which, about that time, a clerk, the favourite and minister of King Louis, held in France.<sup>2</sup>

Happy Aelred ! what had he to do but to lead a religious and literary life ; he was known far and wide for his learning, and an abbot of Westminster dedicated to him a work of his, written "in pure Latin," as being one who "in a king's court cultivated letters." It seems that he went out hunting too with the king ;<sup>3</sup> at least he is well acquainted "with the law of hunting, which they call the *tryste* in vulgar tongue," where all the nobles, with their hounds, were posted in different parts of the wood, so as to surround the quarry ; and he knew well the paths and recesses of the forest, for he describes a flowery knoll in the midst of it, where the tired huntsmen lay down to rest after their toils. At this time it is probable that he made those acquisitions of historical lore which afterwards fitted him to become one of the historians of England. He had inherited the hereditary love for the royal line of

<sup>1</sup> De Genealog. ap Twysden.

<sup>2</sup> St. Aelred is called *dapifer regius*. In common cases *dapifer* means simply the Reeve, but in a king's household it is equivalent to *senescallus*. The *dapifer* of King Louis is called *Major domus regiæ*, or *maire du palais*, in the *Chronicle of Morigny*, v. Benedictine note to St. Bernard, Ep. 78. Laurence addresses St. Aelred as *dispensator regius*, and he himself talks of his having come *de coquinis non de scholis*.

<sup>3</sup> De Genealog. ap. Twysden. p. 367.

Cedric, and delighted in the beautiful tales of Alfred and St. Neot, and the battle of Ashdown. He loved to trace their genealogy, and he looked forward with hope to their restoration. If to be loved and honoured, and to pass a life in congenial studies, with no enemies, free from great sin, be happiness, then was Aelred happy ; and men, as he passed, pointed him out as a man whose lot was to be envied.

And yet the High Steward of Scotland was not happy. It would be easy to give the reason for this phenomenon in a few words. It was the grace of God, urging him to his place in Christ's kingdom ; it was the cross casting its shadow on all earthly joys. This is of course the proper explanation of it ; but it is through our own feelings and tempers that God leads us, and it is the part of history to unfold the human side of events, which appear to us, and are really, as far as we are concerned, various and successive ; while, as the work of God, they are one. What then was the reason of Aelred's unhappiness amidst all the gifts of nature and of grace ? The friends about him called it morbid restlessness, and he tried to believe them and to shake it off ; but it would come back again for all his efforts. Even his books were tasteless : neither Cicero nor Horace could satisfy him, and the purest latinity could not confer happiness ; nay, the philosophy of St. Augustine and St. Anselm was at fault ;<sup>1</sup> and after he had proved to his satisfaction the being of a God, after having confuted Manichees and Nominalists, the same void was in his heart, and he was still restless.

<sup>1</sup> The sixth chapter of the Spec. Char., lib. i., is evidently taken from St. Anselm ; and the influence of St. Augustine de Trinitate is also evident throughout the Speculum.

No one could blame his studies ; it was a noble scheme to reform the taste and arouse the understanding of a nation arising from barbarism ; but it is not enough that a work should be blameless, if it be not that which the Lord requires of us. In itself a literary life is of all others the most empty and unsatisfactory. Things that belong exclusively to this 'sublunary sphere are at least in their place ; they are all of earth, and they gain the things of earth and men enjoy them as they may. But the student aims higher and fails ; after he has thought, and judged, and analyzed, he has not extended one jot the sphere of human knowledge, because it is human after all. The lowest angel knows at a glance by intuition what is to us a laboured fabric of premise and conclusion, and is at best but the shadow of the truth. After all that is often said about the blamelessness of literary pleasures, they do not satiate the hungry soul a whit the more ; chalk and chaff are not food, because they are not poison. So learned Aelred by a bitter experience : but he had still something else to learn, and that was, that the heart as well as the understanding can be filled but by one object alone. It was not wonderful that Aelred found his high notions of friendship sink under him. Was it altogether Christian, this craving for being loved, this insatiable desire of winning human hearts ? It was not admiration or honour that he sought—it was love ; and is this not only a more subtle form of inordinate affection ? There was once an Archbishop whom any one who knows the works of both, would at once compare with Aelred, like him in his generous devotedness, and his warm affections, the favourite of a king's court, the honoured friend of a king's son. Like Aelred he was of classical taste, consulted by wits and learned

men, a lover of St. Augustine, a Christian philosopher. Yet all were nothing to him, rank, and honour, and wealth ; they slid away from his mind as from a polished surface, and had no hold upon it ; but there was one thing which he wished and obtained, the affection of those about him. High as was his rank, yet the lowest did not shrink before the stately figure of the Archbishop of Cambray and the Peer of France. He was dead to all things but one, and that was human affection. God in his mercy separated him from the being whom he loved most on earth, the king's son, who was his friend and his pupil, and thus was his whole man crucified. How very much of this resembles Aelred's case, we shall soon see ; but meanwhile we will quote the words of this saintly prelate, about this same desire of loving and being loved, which he himself knew so well.<sup>1</sup>

“After having renounced all that is around us, and which is not self, we must come to the last sacrifice, which is that of all which is in us, and is self. If a man's temper is full of frankness and disinterestedness, if his disposition leads him to take pleasure in doing good, and if he has keen delicacy of feeling, and a taste for fair-dealing and for disinterested friendship, then let him beware lest he fall in love with himself ; let him guard against a feeling of complacency in these natural gifts. Every one must at some time or other have come across some man apparently all for other people, nothing for himself, caressed by all the good, one who gives up his own wishes and is forgetful of self. This same forgetfulness is so great a virtue that even self-love would fain imitate it, and puts

<sup>1</sup> Fenelon, *Nécessité du renoncement*.

its greatest glory in appearing to seek for none. This self-command and renunciation, which would be the crucifixion of nature if it were real and effectual, becomes, on the contrary, the very subtle and viewless instrument of a pride, which disdains all the ordinary methods of rising, and would trample under foot all the gross subjects of vanity, which puff up other men. Still it is easy to pull the mask from this pride, with all its modesty, though it in no way peeps out as pride, so completely does it seem to have renounced all that allures others. If those whom such a man loves, and assists, do not pay him back with their friendship, esteem and confidence, he is touched to the quick. Look at him ; he is not disinterested, however he strive to appear so. The truth is, he pays himself not with the base coin that others seek ; he wants not mawkish praises nor money, nor the proceeds of place and external dignity. Still he has his price too ; he thirsts after the esteem of the good ; he loves that he may be loved, and that hearts may be touched by his devotedness ; he only appears to be forgetful of self, that he may be in the thoughts of all."

Such, or something like this, were the thoughts of Aelred. He saw that his soul was in danger, and that he must fly. He bethought himself of such words as these, "If thy foot offend thee, cut it off ; if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out." And before these solemn words, his glowing thoughts of friendship looked like a dream of romance. He saw that friendship was a negative thing, it might be a virtue, or it might be a vice ; in itself it was neither. It is one of those natural feelings, which with the whole of man's moral nature is taken for granted in the Gospel. True it is that our blessed Lord has ennobled it by His

wonderful condescension in loving St. John, but in ennobling it, He has declared that it must be sacrificed, if need be, to God's will. This was the lesson which Aelred learned ; he recognized that he had made human affection paramount even to the love of God, and the thought struck him at once that he must fly. He turned pale and trembled at it. Oh ! how comes it that it is always the most loving who are called upon to sacrifice their love ? why are the tenderest hearts chosen to be torn ? why are they who love father and mother, and brethren and sisters, and friends, more intensely than others, ever singled out to stand forth and give them up ? It is one of the miracles of God's grace, bringing strength out of weakness. But it is never accomplished without rending of the heart and agony, which makes it a spiritual martyrdom. And this Aelred felt to the full. How many things were in array against him, keen arguments, tender delicacy, good feelings, to say nothing of pride and the love of ease ! Was the High Steward of Scotland to take his place as the lowest brother in an obscure convent ? the elegant scholar to take to digging ? the trim courtier to put on the coarse monkish cowl ? It was fanaticism to leave the sphere in which he had been placed, and where he might do good. It was ingratitude to leave the good king David, unfeeling to leave prince Henry, the companion of his youth. Besides which, he had a friend whom he loved more than life ; he does not tell us his name, but this was the sorest pain of all. Nothing but the full conviction that his soul was in danger where he was, could have enabled him to break away from so many ties.

And where was he to go, when he once turned himself on the wide world, and had given up the royal

palace in which he had lived from childhood. In those days there could be but one answer to the question, he could but be a monk. He might have been a secular priest ; but first of all, there were the mitre and crosier in the back-ground, which he dreaded ; and secondly, it would not have answered his purpose at all, for it would have left him in the midst of his friends with all the ties, from which it was his very design to break away. They knew the cloister and the world well, who made conversion a synonym for monastic life. It was a turning to God, heart and soul, when one who had dwelt in the world, and partaken of its pleasures, went into the cloister to learn to have no joy, but God alone.

Besides which, becoming a secular priest was by no means giving up the world, in the same sense as entering the cloister. It was not the same thing, and if Aelred was called by God's grace to the one, he was not to the other. It should never be forgotten that the middle age world was a very bad one ; it was better than its neighbours, but alas ! the world is the world in every age. The twelfth century was not a period of fantastic youth, like the fifteenth, nor was it the faithless, philosophic, calculating manhood of a period, about which the less, reader, that you and I say, the better ; it was rather like boyhood, petulant and quaint, in its waywardness. Its tournaments were the rough plays of grown up boys, ending it might be, in blood, seldom in ill-will ; its very policy was a very inartificial wiliness ; a ready lie, a shutting of ports against Pope's messengers, are specimens of it. And the Clergy had their world too, one, which would not have suited Aelred. The cathedral Clergy and the secular canons were in a bad state ; their rich benefices were spent in procuring the means of a sense-



less pomp. They were but little like ecclesiastics, those painted figures, on prancing horses, with gilded bits, embroidered saddles, and spurs plated with silver, while the rider himself with his flowing locks, invisible tonsure, and pelisse of various furs, with purple collar and fringe, like a woman's dress, remind us of the courtly abbé of later times.<sup>1</sup> As for ecclesiastics in general, Henry II.<sup>2</sup> would not have had a pretext for endeavouring to bring the Clergy into the secular courts if there had not been among them many criminals of the worst class ; and the decrees of councils in those times fully bear out the inference. The only way to reform such a system was to create an order of men, founded on an entirely opposite principle, to oppose voluntary poverty to riches, chastity to licentiousness, and obedience to insolence. An individual might indeed stay in the midst of the evil, and do his best to reform it ; but this was not enough, system must be opposed to system. In the monastic system is contained the remedial system of the church ; and this was the reason why in the twelfth century, regular canons so often replaced secular, in cathedral churches ; why the Premonstrants were founded with a direct bearing on the Clergy, and why the Augustinians were to such an extent reformed. The seculars indeed had their own work too ; among them arose almost the only martyr in the century, and that one was St. Thomas. Still the monks were the real reformers of the Church. And this was the reason of St. Bernard's impassioned language, by which he calls upon men to come into the cloister. It was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare

<sup>1</sup> St. Bern. Ep. i. 2. In Cant. xxxiii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> William of Newbridge, ii. 16.

ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight ; repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was the voice which sounded through Aelred's heart, and would not let him rest. So he did not go to Durham, where the monks served the stately cathedral, lately built by William of St. Carilefe ; nor did he go southward to Westminster, the Abbot of which was his friend, where was the sacred body of his beloved St. Edward ; but he chose out an obscure Cistercian monastery, the name of which was hardly known in the world.

It must have been with a heavy heart that Aelred bade adieu to Henry,<sup>1</sup> "that meek and pious man, of sweet spirit, and heart full of the milk of human kindness, him with whom he had lived from his cradle, his playfellow in boyhood, his companion in youth ; the good king David too, now an old man, whom he loved above all men ;" and many years afterwards the bitterness of that parting remained fresh in his soul, and he declared that "though he left them in body in order to serve his Lord, his heart was always with them." It must have been with a sad heart that he heard for the last time the bells of the Abbey of Scone, and saw at his feet the noble Tay winding through a vale, whose steep sides, clothed with thick woods, open upon a plain, where even then rose the towers of the fair town of Perth, the whole bounded by the blue outline, and the seamed sides of the Grampians. With a heavy heart did he quit Dunfermline, and retrace the still recent steps trodden by St. Margaret, on her painful way from the shore to the palace, and which even now after seven centuries of revolutions and estrangement, are uneffaced from the hearts of the

<sup>1</sup> St. Aelred, *De Genealog. ap. Twysden*, 368.

people. Sadly he must have felt, when he turned his back on Dunfermline, with its expanse of sea glancing in the sun before him, and on the wide spread plain of Perth, for he was going to a place where the horizon was very circumscribed. Even now, we may follow his steps. There is in the North Riding of York, not far from the borders of Durham, a nook of surpassing beauty amidst a perfect labyrinth of vales, formed by ridges of hills, crossing each other in every direction. The place is one where three valleys meet, two of them shutting in a third, which is Rievaux. Along the brow of the hill which overhangs this vale the traveller passes, and then goes down the steep side through hanging woods, from terrace to terrace, till at the very bottom, from the last ledge of all, he lights upon a ruined Abbey. Lovely indeed it is in its calm decay, rising to a stately height from the bosom of its smooth, grassy lawn, and most beautiful it must have been in the days of its magnificence, when the Abbey burst upon the sight, lying at the bottom of its deep dell, folded in from the world. Long before the traveller came upon it as he was winding down the successive steepes, it announced its presence by its sweet bells, and great was the joy of the tired wayfarer when it lay before him with its cloistered quadrangle, and over the long roof of the refectory and dormitory rose the lofty Church, with its light lancet windows towering over all. Beautiful it was in all the graceful and disciplined animation of monastic life ; its white monks issuing from its gates in their hooded riding mantles, to go to some distant grange, or working all together in a line on the hanging steepes, while the mill was heard, its wheel turning merrily amidst the splashing waters of the mountain-stream, which dashed along its pebbly bed at

the bottom of the dell, where it had just joined a sister stream at the fork where the valleys met. Alas ! it is very different now ; but we will not mourn over it ; there was a time when it was just as unlike the stately pile, still noble in its ruins, and that was on the morning of that day when the Abbey gates opened and closed on Aelred.

Many things there are in the middle ages, which look very beautiful at a distance, and were beautiful in reality, but which required something more than romance to make them tolerable. The crusades were a noble conception, but Blanche of Castile fainted when she saw the cross on St. Louis's shoulder, and Joinville durst not cast a look at his castle as he passed it, lest his heart should fail him, and he should return to his wife and children.

If there had been any portion of fine sentiment in Aelred's retirement to Rievaulx,<sup>1</sup> it would have disappeared now. Not one stone of the noble edifice, now in ruins, had then been raised ; not an approach to triple lancet, or rose window, or shaft with capital of twisted foliage. A very few years, probably not more than two had elapsed, since Walter de Espee had planted in this place a colony of Cistercians, sent by St. Bernard from Clairvaux, under William, their first abbot. Tradition in after times framed a romantic story about the foundation of the noble abbey, that Walter had brought the white monks from across the sea to pray for the soul of his son, a high-

<sup>1</sup> Rievaulx was founded in 1132. There are no data for ascertaining the precise time when St. Aelred left Scotland. It seems likely however that he did so before the foundation of the first Cistercian Monastery in Scotland, which was Melross. 1136.

spirited boy, who had been thrown from his horse at the foot of a little stone cross, by the road side, and had died on the spot. The truth however is, that Walter had no children, and gave a great part of his lands to the Church.<sup>1</sup> Blackmore was the ominous name of the place, which the Norman monks changed to the sweeter name of St. Mary of Rievaux, from the Rye, a little stream that ran through the valley. It is said to have been a place that made the soul shudder, and a vast wilderness, and Aelred himself in after times called it a very deep dale. It was a place hard to find, amidst the windings of the many valleys, and Aelred, after travelling along the high ridge, plunged down through a path cut in the tangled wood. Down and still further down, he went as though he were leaving the cheerful light of day. The old and gloomy trees seemed to close about him, and as he approached the bottom of the valley, the leaves were dripping with the damp mists which arose from the ill-drained marshy grounds around the little stream. But when he knocked at the lowly gate of the abbey, and the brother fell down at his feet, as was the wont in Cistercian abbeys, with a "Deo gratias," thanking God for the new-comer, then Aelred felt as if he had at last found a resting-place in this weary world. Then William the abbot, the friend of St. Bernard, welcomed the young Saxon to St. Mary's house ; and though their dark features were those of foreigners, and their language was that of enemies of his race, yet he felt that he was among brothers. The struggle for life and death was over, and he had but to go on in

<sup>1</sup> St. Aelred expressly says so in his History of the War of the Standard.

the path which God had assigned to him. And now that it is over, we will give the description of it in his own words. It will show how he looked back upon it, when time had enabled him to think calmly about it, when he could lay bare his own mind, as St. Augustine did in his Confessions. "Lo ! my sweet Lord, once I sought rest in the world for my wretched soul, but every where I found toil and groans, grief and affliction of spirit. Thou didst cry out to me, Lord, Thou didst cry out, Thou didst call me, frighten me and break through my deafness, Thou didst smite and break down my obstinacy ; Thou didst bring sweetness to my bitter heart. I heard, but ah ! later than I ought, Thy voice crying to me ; for I lay, polluted and rolled in filth, bound, and a captive, in the nest of iniquity, crushed under the weight of inveterate habit. Then I bethought myself, who I was, where, and of what nature. I shuddered, Lord, and shrunk in fear, from my own lineaments ; the foul reflection of my wretched soul frightened me. I was displeasing to myself, because Thou wert pleasing. I fain would have fled from myself, and to Thee, but the merest trifles, as one has said before me,<sup>1</sup> the vanity of vanities, which had seduced my soul, held me back ; the chains of vile bodily habit bound me, the love of flesh and blood held me in bonds, the graces of social life tightened them ; above all there were the ties of a certain friendship, sweet to me above all the sweets of life. And men looking on my smiling outside, and knowing nothing of what was going on within, used to say of me, Oh ! how well is it with him, how well ! they did not know that all was wrong where alone all

<sup>1</sup> St. Aug. Conf. 8, 11.

ought to be right. For my wound was deep-seated within, tormenting, scaring me, and filling all within me with its intolerable corruption ; and unless Thou hadst stretched forth Thy hand, who knows if, intolerable burden as I was to myself, I might not have had recourse to the worst remedy of despair ! I began then to consider as much as one who had no experience could do, what great sweetness there is in Thy love, how much peace in that sweetness, how much security in that peace. By degrees Thou didst become sweet to my taste, still partially diseased as it was, and I used to say to myself, O ! that I were healed ; and I would raise myself up to Thee, but again I used to fall back upon myself. Still fleshly pleasures kept me as a man in chains, by a strange power of habit, though my soul really loved best that which it could yet only guess at by the power of its intellect. Often did I say to my friends, where are now all our pleasures, all our joys, all our delights ? at this moment how much of them do we feel ? all that is joyful in them is gone ; and all that remains is that part which stings our conscience, which causes us to fear death, which binds us to everlasting punishment. Put side by side with all our riches, our delights, and honours, this one thing which those who are Christ's possess, the right not to fear death. I loathed myself as I spoke this, and sometimes I wept in the bitter struggle of my soul. I loathed all that I saw, and still the habit of fleshly pleasure held me down. But Thou, who hearest the groans of the captives, who loosest those appointed unto death, Thou didst burst my chains ; Thou, who bringest publicans and harlots into Paradise, hast converted me, the chief of sinners, to Thyself. And lo ! I breathe again under Thy yoke, I am at rest under

Thy burden, for Thy yoke is easy, and Thy burden is light."<sup>1</sup>

---

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### *The Battle of the Standard.*

It was fortunate for Aelred that he escaped when he did from the court of Scotland to his quiet home at Rievaulx. A very few years, probably hardly two, after he had made his profession, a storm gathered in Scotland, and swept over the north of England, such as would have effectually destroyed his quiet had he not already got into shelter. In 1136, Henry I. died, and then began the stormy reign of Stephen, disastrous for all England, but especially for the north. In this chapter then will come out the difference between the world and the cloister. The contrast is like that picture of the transfiguration, where Peter, James, and John are seen with the Lord in the Mount, round the base of which are heard the howlings of the poor demoniac, torn by the devil, whom even the Apostles cannot cast out, and apparently deserted even by the Lord. We will try to look upon this turmoil as Aelred would have done, nay, as he did, for he himself is the historian, from which the greater part is taken; and in the wildest fits of the storm, we may imagine him looking on quietly and listening with his head enveloped in his cowl in the cloister of Rievaulx.

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. i. 28.



Strange was the scene in England as soon as king Henry was dead ; law and justice in those times depended so much on individuals that the withdrawal of one man was a signal for general riot. Henry's power over his nobles was very much of a personal nature ; he had done what in the fifteenth century it cost a king of France a rebellion among his nobles before he could effect ; he had abridged their rights of chase in favour of the crown.<sup>1</sup> It was not an empty privilege, that of vert and venison in the broad forests of English oak, which covered the land ; besides the joys of the noisy chase, there were the huge branches of the oak to keep up the large fire in the baronial hall, and the substantial banquet of the boar's head and venison for the lord and his retainers. Henry had constituted himself protector-general of woods, forests, deer, wild boars, and game of all sorts.<sup>2</sup> Some men durst not hunt in their own woods, for fear of finding a king's officer at their doors, summoning them to appear at the chief pleas ; and if Henry's sharp eye discovered that a wood had been thinned or wasted, he would impose a fine on the offender. Hardly was the king dead than a joint attack on woods and forests took place, and a general onslaught was made on the large herds of deer, which a long reign had preserved, " so that hardly two could any where be seen together." The highway had always belonged to the king, as well as the forest, and all offences committed were punished by his officers, but now the king's peace was broken with im-

<sup>1</sup> v. Michelet. *Histoire de France*, xiii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen swore when he came to the throne *quod neminem de silvis propriis implacitaret licet venationem in eisdem caperet, sicut fecerat rex Henricus*. Brompton ap. Twysden, p. 1024.

punity, for there was no king to keep it. Every man preyed on his neighbour, and made the best of his time, men wiped off old scores, and revenged themselves on their enemies; rapine and violence of all sorts reigned in England as soon as news came that the old king was dead. The matter was not much mended when Stephen, by the perjury of bishops and barons, was elected to the throne.<sup>1</sup> To do him justice, at the beginning of his reign, he seems certainly to have done his best to re-establish peace, but his title to the throne was defective, and when once the Empress landed, anarchy and confusion took their own course, and it was said emphatically that "there was no justice in Stephen's reign." Then arose a species of men, which feudalism had ever a tendency to create; the petty lords, who, from their dungeon-keeps, ruthlessly wasted and harried the whole country around them. Our notions of feudal barons are ever connected with fair castles and trains of knights, fluttering pennons, and glittering armour. But the fact is that during the reigns of the first Norman kings, very few nobles were allowed to have castles.<sup>2</sup> It was from the lack of fortresses that England fell so soon into the power of the Conqueror; and he built castles every where to keep the country in awe; but then he kept them in his own hands, and his soldiers were only

<sup>1</sup> Gesta Steph. 929.

<sup>2</sup> Thus one Turgisius in Stephen's reign, holds a castle, and the country round, but it is said *rex ad conservandum magis quam ad possidendum commiserat*. Gesta Steph. p. 966. Thus of the castle of Exeter it is said, *quod semper regalis juris extiterat*. Ibid, 934. The Bishop of Durham asks leave to have a castle *Anglia Sacra*, 723, as also the Bishop of Salisbury and Ely in Henry the First's time.

warders not possessors. The manor house, and not the castle was then the characteristic of England ; magnificent Umbravilles and Bagots must as yet content themselves with a low moated house, two stories high, with its staircase outside, and only to rise by and bye to the dignity of a castle. But in king Stephen's time,<sup>1</sup> every man did as he pleased, or as he could, and when the day of reckoning came in Henry's time it was found that every knightling possessed not only a castle but a seal, like the king of England himself. Little do they know of these iron-hearted men, who picture to themselves a generous knight errant, pricking forth in search of adventures. Alas ! chivalry is but an ideal, a high and beautiful standard, created by Christianity, but never realized except in individuals ; for one St. Louis there were a thousand Bluebeards. The knight of the twelfth century was not the fantastic and often licentious champion of later times ; but in king Stephen's time at least he was often a needy adventurer, who roamed about the country, pillaging his neighbours, and looking out for a fief. Exceptions occur which cheer the weary reader of history, for instance that young Christian knight, who, as the beginning of the good deeds to which his vow of knighthood bound him, sheltered in his house a whole convent of forlorn monks, whose new-built monastery had been burnt over their heads.<sup>2</sup> But generally speaking your knight at the time of which we are writing was a very suspicious character. As for the nobles they were but too often men of brutal

<sup>1</sup> William of Newbridge, i. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale v. p. 349. Dominus Rogerus de Molbray qui cingulum militare de novo sumpserat, inter initia bonorum operum suorum habitationem providit, &c.

licentiousness, great consumers of beef and wine, and great oppressors of the poor.<sup>1</sup>

When such men as these were let loose upon the world by the license of civil war, it was not wonderful that the defenceless Church should suffer. The churches were found to be excellent castles, ready made, without the trouble of building. Thus a certain Geoffrey Talbot seized on the cathedral church of Hereford, expelled the priests, and made it a garrison for his soldiers; in the church-yard fortifications were thrown up, and the dead were torn from their graves, and their bodies thrown about, while a military engine was in full play on the tower, throwing large stones and missiles from the place "whence," says the chronicler, "the sweet and peaceful warnings of the bells were wont to be heard."<sup>2</sup> This is but one specimen of what often occurred; and it will be easily believed that monasteries were not better treated than secular churches. The Abbeys of Ramsay and Coventry were turned into fortresses, and the monks expelled; a nunnery at Winchester was burnt, and even the holy Abbey of St. Ethelreda, at Ely, was plundered by these wicked soldiers.<sup>3</sup> No place was safe from them, and the inmates of every monastery might prepare themselves each night at compline, for the possibility of being expelled from their homes before the bell sounded for matins.

All this took place south of the Tees, but the north of England was exposed to the inroads of a terrible enemy, and the ravages inflicted by these savages must have been more painful to Aelred, because they were

<sup>1</sup> Gesta Steph. 946.

<sup>2</sup> Gesta Steph. 948. 958.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. Par. p. 79, 80. Gesta Steph. 960, 964.

let loose upon England by his best friend, David, king of Scotland. The friendship of David for Henry I., and his love for the family of his mother, and for his niece, the Empress, all induced him to take her part against Stephen. Her succession to the throne was looked upon as the restoration of the line of St. Edward to the English throne. King David, with all the barons of England, had sworn to King Henry that he would uphold his daughter, and he would not perjure himself as the others had done. Besides which he laid claim to the earldom of Northumberland for his son Henry. These motives might be enough to call for his invasion, but still it involved an awful responsibility to let loose upon the north the savage Picts. David would have been more like St. Louis had he paused before he put in motion this uncontrollable power ; but he was deceived by the Scottish party among his subjects, who played off his predilection for the Saxon line to urge him on against the Saxons of the north of England. But however this was, in the year 1136, not long after Aelred's conversion, news arrived that the Scottish army was coming over the border. On came the torrent, the chivalry of the Lowlands forming its centre, though far out-numbered by the motley assemblage of half-naked Galwegians, and men of the Isles. The miseries inflicted by a modern army, with all its discipline, are horrible enough, and a feudal army where each man was accounted for, and knew his banner was a scourge wherever it went ; but all this was nothing to the passage of a horde of undisciplined savages, most indifferent Christians at home, and giving loose to every passion which disgraces human nature

abroad. It can only be paralleled with the miseries inflicted by the mercenary troops of the 16th century,<sup>1</sup> when armies were no longer modelled on the feudal principle, and before the modern standing army had been introduced. The commissariat of a Pictish host was doubtless none of the best, and besides this, they had all the wanton cruelty with which the savage loves to torture his victim. It would be wrong to give the sickening detail of their cruelties ; suffice it to say that droves of captive women whom they had made widows and childless, driven before them with spears, formed the van of this horrible army. This mass when once set in motion was beyond the controul of him who had called these uncouth beings out of their native morasses. Churches were burnt and pillaged, and monasteries sacked, in one case, which has happened to remain on record, the poor monks of Calder, in Copeland, were turned out on the wide world, with their whole property contained in a wagon, drawn by eight oxen ; and this was doubtless not a singular instance. The only alleviation to this misery was, that David placed a guard of his own soldiers over Hexham, and all the miserable inhabitants who had taken refuge there. He also gave back into the hands of the Prior of Hexham all that part of the booty of the wretched country which had fallen to his share. Hexham was Aelred's old home, and this probably crossed David's mind when he chose it as a place of sanctuary for Northumberland. One other softer feature amidst this scene of horrors is the circumstance that William, Abbot of Rievaulx, was chosen to give into the hands of the king of Scotland the town of Wark, which belonged to

<sup>1</sup> V. Manzoni, *Promessi Sposi*.

Walter de Espec, the founder of the monastery. In his white habit he might venture in safety as a messenger of peace through the Scottish army ; and it must have been a strange sight to see the Abbot at the head of the haggard inhabitants of the town, who had been reduced by famine to feed on pickled horse-flesh, issuing from the gates to deliver up the keys to the conqueror.

The stream of invaders was rapidly moving on towards Rievaulx, when it was stopped by an event long afterwards celebrated in the annals of border warfare—the battle of the Standard. Aelred's dearest friends, David of Scotland and Henry, were engaged in it, and yet he could not wish them to conquer. Besides, his affections were divided, for on the other side was Walter de Espec, the founder of Rievaulx, his new home, and so from the bottom of his deep-hidden valley he prayed with his brethren for the success of the English arms ; and when it was over he became the chronicler of an action which saved Yorkshire with its churches and monasteries from desolation. It was a very crusade, this war of the Standard, for it was apparently a hopeless task to attempt to stop the progress of the countless swarms which David had brought out of Scotland. But the old Archbishop of York implored the nobles and knights of Yorkshire, for the love of God and His Saints, to venture their lives, to save from desolation the houses of God, and the poor people from all the horrors which were awaiting them. Aelred becomes enthusiastic when he describes the dark hair, broad forehead, and large piercing eyes of Walter de Espec, and details at length the eloquence of the noble soldier when he addressed the soldiers from the foot of the Standard, and promised them

victory, in the name of the Saints and of the Lord. Their standard was a long pole, on which floated the banner of St. Cuthbert, and from which was suspended a pix containing the Body of the Lord ; and under this, they swore to conquer or die. Aelred describes on the day of battle, the small compact body of the English, with their armour glittering in the sun, and their pennons floating on their lances, while the priests in their white albs flew from rank to rank to exhort them. The Bishop of the Orkneys blessed and absolved them, and the whole army answered his benediction with a loud Amen. Then the trumpets sounded, and with a wild shriek the Galwegians came on, but their countless host was broken before the serried ranks of the men-at-arms, around which they closed as the waves dash against the rock, which is islanded amongst them. They might at length have broken this little band, but their headlong valour was rendered useless by the incessant clouds of arrows discharged from the bows of the Yorkshire yeomanry. However at the moment that they were yielding, the battle was again rendered doubtful, for with the speed of lightning Henry, prince of Scotland, charged with the chivalry of the Scottish army ; and here Aelred's love for the friend of his youth betrays itself, and he almost seems to cheer them on as they broke through "the lines of the Southrons as they would sweep aside a cobweb," and pursued them off the field.<sup>1</sup> But still poured on the steady ceaseless showers of the English arrows, and when Henry returned from the pursuit he saw the royal standard, the Dragon, moving off the field in full flight, and found that he was left almost alone with a

<sup>1</sup> De bello Stand. Twysden 345.



few knights about him. And here again amidst his joy for the victory which God had given to the prayers of His church, Aelred pauses to describe the valour of the friend of his youth, how prince Henry, seeing himself left with a few knights about him, turned with a smile to his companions, bade them mingle in the pursuit, as though they were on the English side, and setting spurs to his horse, rode right through the enemy to rejoin his father. This battle freed the north of England from this horrid scourge, and it must be said for David, that when afterwards Northumberland and Durham were ceded to him, the north was resting in peace, while the south was still suffering all the misery of civil war.<sup>1</sup>

---

## CHAPTER V.

### *The Cistercian Novice.*

SUCH was the world outside the walls of Rievaulx, during the few years after Aelred first became a monk, and such the world in which he must from his connexion with the court of Scotland have mingled, had he not taken timely refuge in his monastery. Strangely different indeed was his new mode of life from that which he led in the palace of Scone or of Dunfermline. Certainly the good monks of Cîteaux showed no anxiety to sweeten the harshness of the rule for their novices. For four days the new comer was kept like a stranger in the hospice, and no one took notice of

<sup>1</sup> William of Newbridge, i. 22.

him after his first interview with the Abbot ; and then he was introduced into the chapter, where he prostrated himself on the ground before the Abbot, and was saluted by him with an abrupt, "What wouldest thou?" Then was detailed to him the rule in all its rigour, and if he persisted in asking for admission, the Abbot said aloud, "God who hath begun in thee, bring it to the end:" then all the convent answered Amen. Still the candidate was led back to the house of the guests, and the same ceremony was repeated in the chapter for three days, and on the third only was he admitted into the number of the novices. Then his secular dress, the soft clothing of the king's house was taken off him, with the words, "The Lord put off thee the old man with his works." And then the novice's dress was put upon him ; it had not even the dignity of the cuculla and scapular of the full-grown monks ; it was a short tunic with sleeves, and a white cloak with a cowl.<sup>1</sup> If a nobleman were suddenly to find himself arrayed in the dress of a workhouse, the change could not be more complete. But the Abbot as he put it on the novice said, "The Lord put upon thee the new man, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This reconciled Aelred to the change, for in these words were contained the whole of monastic life, and of this all its outward forms were but symbols. Death to nature and life to God, and the carrying out of the vows of baptism, was the moral of the whole. Without this, fast and vigil, rough labour in the fields or beautiful ritual, with vestment of black, brown, white, or grey, were but quaint devices of fantastic devotion, and "friar's trumpery." Alas ! there

have been worldly and ambitious hearts, beating beneath the monk's habit, for no outward forms can keep the soul against its will ; but Rievaulx was not at all a likely place to harbour such monks. And at all events Aelred, with whom alone we are concerned, looked upon himself as assuming the cross for a life-long crusade against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

“Let the novice begin and leave off labour, read, and go to bed, with the monks ; let him eat the same food, and be clad with the same stuff,” says the rule. We therefore know at once what Aelred was about ; he plunged without delay into Cistercian discipline ; and an exceeding trial it must have been. To any one brought up in a king's palace, the details of husbandry must have been inexpressibly irksome ; and not only must the novice dig, but he must dig well, for the livelihood of the monks depends on their own exertions. The delicate and jewelled fingers, accustomed only to turning over the leaves of illuminated manuscripts, must have been sorely galled with the spade and the fork. This however, together with the whole discipline of fasts and vigils, he must have expected before he came ; the man who has fled for his life to the wilderness must not expect to find its wild and sour fruits like the summer-fruit in a king's garden ; thorns and briers grow in the desert ; we must look elsewhere for lilies and roses. But one thing there was from which human nature recoils most of all : he was not at all treated as the late High Steward of Scotland, one who had made a great present to religion by his change. He was only brother Aelred, the lowest of the novices, because the last comer, last in every thing, except in processions, where, with his short tunic and sleeveless cloak, and his flowing locks, he preceded the long

line of shaven crowns and scapulars, because the lowest walked first. It is a hard thing for one who has been considered rather as teacher than learner all his life, to find himself, when grown up, at the feet of others ; and the years between twenty and thirty are not always the period when men are most docile. The cell of the novices was a portion of the monastery adjoining the cloister, and here they were trained by the master of the novices, an officer who was to teach them to know the Psalter by heart, and to train them in monastic discipline. Aelred could doubtless have instructed this officer in Cicero and in writing Latin, but he submitted to him with the docility of a child, for he knew well that the science of spiritual things required no learning or intellectual power.

When he had a little recovered from his bewilderment at the novelty of his situation, and found leisure to look about him, he was struck with the wonderful peace of this little cloister-world, the noiseless gliding motion of the brethren, as they bent their heads in silence when they passed each other in the cloisters, and the strange way in which one soul seemed to actuate this vast body. And this was what first struck our novice ; it was good hard work in which they were engaged, and yet “with such a placid unruffled countenance, with such a holy noiseless order, did they do all things, that scarce did they seem to move at all.”<sup>1</sup> And then their mysterious preternatural silence had something awful about it ; for it was very unlike a dogged or sullen silence, and this was evident from the bright beaming countenances of the brethren, and the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. Petri de Roya at the end of St. Bernard's Letters, ed. Ben.

ready cheerfulness in which they helped one another in their respective works. No man seemed to have a will of his own ; and Aelred thought that he had seen at last the realization of his dreams of friendship. At first, amongst such a number all seemed to him very much alike ; all had the same white habit, and even the same cast of countenance ; just as in a foreign country, till the eye gets accustomed to the type of the new race, all seem equally dark or equally fair, without much difference. By degrees however he learned to distinguish between the countenances about him, and one in particular struck him. It was the face of a man, much younger than those of equal rank in the monastery with himself, which showed that he must have been hardly more than a child when he took the vow. The grave sweetness of his face, and the depth of the recollection and silence of the young monk struck Aelred ; and he learned (probably from the master of the novices, whose business it was at times to converse with his charge,) that the monk's name was Simon, and that his conversion was a miracle of God's grace. As a mere boy, God had called him away from his kindred and his home, to serve Him as a monk. What the circumstances were are not known ; probably Aelred did not know them himself ; he only knew that Simon was of noble blood, and had left his father's house. Men wondered what could attract him in monastic life at that early age ; " but He knew, says Aelred,<sup>1</sup> who was leading thee on, who had set on fire thy yet tender heart with the flame of His love, and thou didst run after the odour of His ointments.<sup>2</sup> He went before thee, beautiful in form above

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. i. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Song of Solomon, i. 3.

the sons of men, anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows, and thou didst run after the odour of His ointments. He went before thee, that One who was lowly in spirit, over the steeps and over the mountains, sprinkling thy path with the fragrance of myrrh and frankincense, and thou didst run after the odour of His ointments. Before thee a Child went, the Child Jesus, showing thee the manger of His poverty, the couch of His lowliness, the chamber of His love, filled with the flowers of His grace, and sprinkled with the unguent of His consolation, and thou didst run after the odour of His ointments." Such was Aelred's way of accounting for the strange fact that a place, like Rievaulx, possessed attractions for such a child ; and now in the beginning of his noviciate, he found it of use to look upon this monk, who was utterly unconscious of the admiration which he was exciting. When his eyes and his thoughts wandered in the choir, one glance at the modest face of Simon chaunting devoutly with his eyes fixed on the ground was enough to recall him to himself. There was no danger in this mute veneration and love, for Cistercian strictness forbade his addressing Simon, and it was of use to him to choose this youthful monk for his model. "The rule of the order," says he, "forbade our speaking, but his countenance spoke to me, his gait spoke, and his very silence spoke. The sight of his humility beat down my pride, this contemplation of his calmness repressed my restless spirit."

After a year of probation, novices were admitted to make their profession : this was the real farewell to the world, where was made the vow of obedience, of stability, and of conversion of life according to the rule of St. Benedict. For a year before, the novice had

counted the cost, and now he felt sure that by God's grace he could keep what it was beyond the strength of the natural man to do. It was with a chastened and a holy joy that Aelred now bent before the Abbot to receive his benediction as a monk. And well he might rejoice, for to him had been given a grace, which but very few could possess. The world must go on, bad as it is, till it please God to destroy it, and in its miserable service must toil on even the good till its end. But Aelred, God had called out of the world, and had made it lawful for him to quit the distractions of the painful scene, and to serve Him not indirectly through actions in themselves indifferent, but like the angels with perpetual acts of prayer and praise. The whole was the act of God's grace, and therefore the hymn for Whitsuntide, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, was then always sung by the convent, and the beautiful ritual every where prays to the Holy Spirit, who alone with the Father and Son is the Giver of all grace, and without whom nothing is strong and holy. And then after the long hair which the novice had till that moment kept, as he would wear it in the world, had been cut off his head by the Abbot, and he was dressed in the regular monastic garment, he went round the convent and humbled himself at the feet of each of his brethren. After which the *Te Deum* was entoned, and whilst it was sung, the newly made monk knelt behind the Abbot, his hands crossed on his breast within the sleeves of his habit. From this time forth he took his place in the choir with the other monks.

Henceforth, even during the stormy time which we described in the last chapter, so peaceful was the tenor of his life, that hardly any thing is known of Aelred, but all that remains of him is of the same

cast as has gone before. He is still the same gentle, loving Aelred, under the white habit, as he had been in the world. When he sat in the Abbey garden, as he says himself, his chief delight was to look about him, and think that each of the mute white figures, walking among the trees, was a brother, and to wonder how it was possible that so many men of different countries, tempers and ages, could dwell together in such perfect peace. If they did not talk, they had no chance of quarrelling, is doubtless a ready answer ; and yet Aelred was right, it was a phenomenon. Men will manage to quarrel, if they have a mind ; and besides, monks and nuns did find ample opportunities of discord, whenever it suited them ; and it was this quarrelsomeness, and not other sins more commonly ascribed to them, which was the besetting sin of convents. Cluny had been not long before split into parties under Abbot Pontius ; and even Cistercians, alas ! in after times must needs call in the judgments of popes and legates to settle their internal dissensions. It is evident that monks when they lose the spirit of their order must be quarrelsome. The very object of Monasticism is to give a proper outlet to devotional feelings, which are stifled in the world, because it would be fanatical to indulge them ; it must therefore be made up to a great extent of external actions. To throw oneself at the feet of another, and call oneself a miserable sinner, in a convent is a part of the rule. But when such actions are done by cold-hearted or discontented men, they become technical and formal ; and punctilious persons are ever most disposed to quarrel. Besides, there might be proud brethren even amidst the austerities of Cîteaux ; and let any one consider the heart-burnings of an ambitious monk, when brother so-and-so was made Prior or Sub-



prior over his head, or was sent on a mission, or allowed to accompany the Abbot to the general chapter ; it was enough to sour a whole convent. Again, it is not quite true that monks never spoke to each other. A perfect silence is enjoined by the rule at certain times ; especially from compline to prime next morning, at refectory, in church and in the cloister, not a word was spoken under severe penalties ; but this implies that there was a less strict silence at other times. When at work, monks might speak to each other, if it was necessary for what they were about. An awkward monk might be reproved by his fellow, or they might differ in opinion, and any one who has tried, may know how hard it is to yield simply for the sake of peace. Aelred therefore was perfectly right in wondering how a large convent of three hundred monks, for such was the number of the brethren of Rievaulx, could hold on its even course without bickerings and quarrels ! Sometimes Aelred had a specimen of a slight fit of ill temper, just to assure him that such things were possible ;<sup>1</sup> but if monks would be cross, they had also their own way of smoothing crossness down. One day, he spoke a word which offended one of the brethren, and at once he fell at his feet to beg his pardon, and waited there till the monk raised him up. And this seems to have been the established conventual method of settling a dispute.<sup>2</sup>

Besides which, it appears that license was sometimes given by Abbots to certain of the brethren to converse together ;<sup>3</sup> and in this way Aelred at length was

<sup>1</sup> De Spir. Ami. ii. 453.

<sup>2</sup> Spec. Char. i. 29.

<sup>3</sup> See note to Life of St. Stephen, p. 140 ; to which add Spec. Char. iii. 40.

allowed to speak to Simon, the young monk, whom he had from the first proposed as his model. It is curious that the Cistercians do not seem to have been so jealous of particular friendships in their communities as were other orders. It was a first principle in monastic life that each individual should devote himself body and mind to the service of his brethren. The monastic system was an expansion of the love of the domestic circle upon a large community ; it was a supernatural home raised by Christianity out of man's natural affections, an expansion of the narrowed sphere of usefulness allowed to most men in the world. It was necessary then that all within that circle should share this love alike. In a large family, if not carefully brought up, the eldest often know little of the youngest ; they naturally form into knots, and the petty factions quarrel with each other. And so it would be in a monastery, which is only a very large family, if the father Abbot was not watchful to prevent an evil, which every careful mother would banish from her home. Thus, if brother Ambrose and brother Benedict were to swear a deathless friendship, and to put their black cowls together in recreation-time, and never talk to any one else, the other brethren might well think themselves aggrieved. And if the same brethren were to proceed also to sit together in cloister, and to nod and wink, when they could not talk, if they were discontented and cross when the Prior set them to work in different parts of the grounds of the monastery, then the father Abbot would have just cause for punishing the refractory brethren. Human love, if not submitted to rules, is a wayward, fantastic, moon-struck thing, flitting from object to object, and never satisfied ; or if fixed upon one in a wrong way, over-

leaping the bounds of law, human and divine. It is like an organ of which every fool may take out the trumpet stop, and bring forth a volume of wild discordant sounds ; but which, when played by rule, discourses most healthful music. Now in a Cistercian monastery, at least at the period when Aelred entered Rievaulx, this same unmanageable element was subjected to such stringent rules that there was little danger of its doing mischief. Where there was no regular recreation-time, and where the brethren never conversed but by license from the father Abbot, and those licenses were few and far between, there was no danger that the spirit of exclusiveness should creep into a convent, for the brethren could not possibly form cabals amongst themselves. No ambitious monk could form a party and intrigue to be elected Abbot ; no harm could come to monastic discipline by heart-burnings and jealousies, breaking out at length into open rebellion, from being long brooded over, when the cowl was drawn over the head, and none could see the workings of the discontented heart upon the face. Aelred could therefore love Simon without fixing his heart upon him with a merely natural friendship. In the painful struggle with himself, before he quitted the world, his affections had been crucified, and they could now revive and flourish again in the cloister. The period of his internal struggles was a long and cheerless winter, during which his heart was "like a tree withered down to its roots. But now that this winter was past, and that all was dead that God would have had die, then came the happy springtide and all revived." That took place in him which we will describe in the words of our old friend the Archbishop of Cambray, for we are not skilled in spiritual matters

ourselves. "God then gives back friendship with all his other gifts an hundred-fold. Then revive all the old loves for true friends. A man no longer loves them in himself, and for himself, but in God, and for God, and that with a love, lively, tender, full of sweetness and of feeling, for God can easily purify feeling. It is not feeling but self-love which corrupts friendship." So Aelred gave himself up without scruple to his holy friendship, for it was God, who by the order of His Providence, bound them together, and inspired them with His love ; and it was Him whom they loved in each other.<sup>1</sup>

Aelred's talents and his loving disposition did not escape the penetrating eye of Abbot William. The friend of St. Bernard could not but love one, whom posterity, by a sort of unconscious judgment, has called "a second Bernard ;" so he made him the master of the novices. Next to the Abbot this was the most important officer in the convent. His business, as has been said before, was to train the novices in monastic discipline, that is, not to teach them to chant Gregorian tones, to march in procession, no, nor even to fast, and to rise in the night to sing psalms. All these were but means to an end ; his business was to form a character in them. The method of forming a Christian character has now been almost reduced to a science, for the ways of God in His dealings with the souls of His elect, have so much uniformity, with all their variety, that a science of spiritual life has been framed out of the reflections of holy men on their own experience. This science has now spread far and wide, and forms a regular portion of clerical education in

<sup>1</sup> Fenelon, *Utilité des peines et des délaissements*, 23.

most parts of Christendom ; but in Aelred's time it was almost confined to the cloister. Very little had been written on the subject till St. Bernard's time, for in early times these Christian writers had been so occupied with the great object of faith itself, that they had comparatively little analyzed the dealings of God's grace with the Christian soul. The cloister then was a sort of traditionary system of ascetic discipline, and this was what the Cistercians had revived through the influence of St. Bernard. Aelred's duty was thoroughly to learn the character of the novice, to support him in heaviness of spirits, to temper his enthusiasm, to judge of his vocation, and if he saw that God had called him to that state of life, to present him at the end of his year of probation to the Abbot. The whole of Aelred's teaching consisted in patience and resignation to the will of God. When first the young novice came into the monastery full of fervour, he was delighted and edified with all he saw. Even the rough bed and coarse food, and the bell bidding him start up when his sleep was sweetest, were all but child's play to him ; the awful silence did not frighten him, and though he could but speak to three men, the Abbot, the prior, and the master, all seemed natural and easy to him.<sup>1</sup> Every thing struck him with admiration, but above all, the wonderful concord of the brethren. "Such unity is there among the brethren," said a wondering novice to Aelred, "that each thing belongs to all, and all things to each. And what marvellously pleases me, there is no acceptation of persons, no account of high birth. How wonderful is it too that the will of one man

<sup>1</sup> *Tribus solum hominibus et hoc rarissime et vix de necessariis loquimur. Spec. Char. lib. ii. 17.*

should be the law to about three hundred men, so that what once he has spoken, is kept by all, as if they had come to precisely that determination themselves, or had heard it from the mouth of God Himself." This was the first stage of feeling in the novices, and the prudent master of the novices was obliged with a smile to tell him, <sup>1</sup>"I would have thee be cautious, and not suppose that any profession upon earth is without its hypocrites, lest if thou shouldest see any one transgress in word or deed, thou shouldest disturb thyself, as though something strange had happened to thee." And to this first ecstatic stage of wonderment succeeded generally a great calm, when the soul was conscious of no feeling at all, when there was no sensible pleasure in prayer, no tears in contemplating the Passion, or ecstasy in thinking on the love of God. And then the poor novice wondered why he did not feel now that he was in religion, the same sensible joys that he used to feel when in the world. Then Aelred would tell him that the love of God did not consist in sensible joys, but in the junction of the will to the will of God, in the surrender of the human will so that it consents to wish for nothing but because God wills it. "Pure love is in the will alone, so that it is not a love of feeling, for the imagination has no part in it ; it is a love, which loves without feeling, as pure faith believes without seeing."<sup>2</sup> He told him that it was a greater sacrifice thus to offer up the will to God, and to remain quietly as long as He would in this want of feeling, than to fast and afflict the body with austerities, and that nothing was so agreeable to God as to remain

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Fenelon sur la secheresse et les distractions, 26.

thus crucified, not seeking for consolation till it was His will to give it. "These sensible consolations were given at the beginning of thy repentance," he would say to the novice, "to draw thee on to Christ; but what wonder if, now their work is done, they are taken away? now is the time for warfare, not for rest, but by and bye, it may be that the Lord will restore these sensible affections, and thus that devout feeling, which at first roused thee, to save thee from perishing, will console thee in thy labour, lest thou sink under it, till after many victories, the pains by which thou art, now in thy noviciate, harassed, will be entirely lulled, and then, like a soldier, whose warfare is done, thou wilt taste the sweets of repose, and be admitted to that consolation of which the Prophet speaks, 'How great is Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee.'"<sup>1</sup>

This is a specimen which has reached us of Aelred's teaching as master of the novices. Doubtless he had many more unpromising novices to deal with than that one whom he has here recorded. Doubtless he had the presumptuous novice, who thought nothing too high for him, who must needs think the order not half strict enough, and would separate himself from his brethren by fasting and watching when the others did not.<sup>2</sup> To this one he would say that strict obedience was the first condition of being a monk at all. Sometimes however he had still more refractory subjects to deal with, and a story remains, which, though it does not rest on very good authority, yet shows the sort of character which tradition assigned to Aelred. There was a clerk, says the legend, who, when he had been a short time at

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. lib. ii. 19.    <sup>2</sup> St. Bern. Serm. in Cant. 19.

Rievaux, began to grow tired of the strictness and monotony of the place, and determined to run away and go back to the world. Aelred, however, loved him and begged of God to give him this soul. So the poor novice came to him, and frankly said, that he was going to run away, but Aelred coolly replied, "Brother, ruin not thyself; nevertheless thou canst not if thou wouldst." Still the man would not listen to reason, and went away from the monastery. He plunged into the woods, and wandered about among the mountain paths from valley to valley, thinking all the while that he was going very far from the Abbey. About sunset, however, he was surprised to find himself close to a convent, which looked marvellously like the Abbey of Rievaux, and sure enough so it was; he had been wandering round and round it all day, and at evening he found himself precisely where he had started. It had been hidden from him by the thick woods about it. This circumstance struck him as so wonderful that he could only see the hand of God in it. So he entered again the monastery which he had quitted, he thought for ever, in the morning. The first person whom he saw was Aelred, who fell on his neck and bursting into tears, kissed him, and said, "Son, why hast thou done so to me? Lo! I have wept for thee with many tears; and I trust in God that as I have asked of the Lord, and as I told thee, thou shalt not perish."



## CHAPTER VI.

*The Spirit of Citeaux.*

AELRED, however, soon had other employment assigned him ; he was compelled by his Abbot to turn author.<sup>1</sup> It appears that certain monks of other orders censured the Cistercians as being dry, formal, unspiritual men ; devotion they thought was incompatible with so much affliction of the body, hard beds, coarse food and manual labour. Theirs was a more smiling religion, which had all the arts at her command, painting, sculpture, and music ; and why should the Cistercians be more strict than their neighbours ? Now this accusation could hardly be made in France, where St. Bernard was taken as a type of the Cistercians, for dry and formal were the very last epithets that could be applied to him. No one could read a line of his writings without feeling their unction and sweetness.<sup>2</sup> As for his decisions in casuistry some might have called him lax, so fully does he hold that a really conscientious intention supplies material defects. None could therefore with any face accuse the French Cistercians of an unspiritual harshness. In England, the new order wanted some one to be its type in the same way, and Aelred was chosen as being the very man to set it forth.<sup>3</sup> Much did he pray to be excused ; he said that he was ill educated, had left school early, and had come straight from a king's kitchen to the desert, where,

<sup>1</sup> V. Ep. cujusdam prefixed to the Speculum, and Spec. Char. lib. ii. 5.      <sup>2</sup> V. Ep. 69, 603.      <sup>3</sup> V. Ep. cujusdam.

like a common peasant, he worked for his daily bread among rocks and mountains with the axe and the mallet, by the sweat of his brow. Nothing however would do, the Abbot only chid his tardiness in obedience, and said that his stewardship in a king's kitchen was only an anticipation of the time when he was to be a steward of spiritual food to his brethren ; and as for rocks and mountains, there might come honey from the stony rock, and more was to be learnt under the shade of the trees at mid-day in the woods about Rievaux than in the schools of worldly philosophy. So write a book he must. It was to be called the *Mirror of Charity*, in which the form of Christian love was to be reflected as in a glass. Hugh, the Prior, had often heard him talk on such subjects, and knew that he was the very man. So Aelred was deputed to write, and a remarkable book it is, considering the time at which it was brought out, while the Scotch were at the gates of Rievaux, during a civil war, in which an empress lost and won a throne, and a king was in prison. When all the world was in arms, bishops and all ; when monasteries were in flames, and cathedrals were turned into castles, this monk was sitting quietly in his cloister, writing on the love of God.

It was a perfect reflection of the Cistercian spirit this *Mirror of Charity*, and a good comment upon its code of laws, the *Chart of Charity*. The aim of the Cistercian reform was to introduce a more spiritual religion into the cloister. Monks had begun to expend their religious feelings in the externals of devotion. The eleventh century had been a time of deadly struggle with the powers of the world ; its great men were men of action like St. Gregory, and its good monks were half hermits, like St. Peter Damian. It

was a time of travail and of labour, for the old world was gone, and the new middle age world was in process of formation. Men were just recovering from the wild fright into which the close of the first thousand years of the Christian era had thrown them ; their panic had broken out in frantic gestures, so that men and women danced<sup>1</sup> hand in hand over the graves in the churchyard like the dances of death in the fifteenth century. And after their recovery they took to building churches, it was the first sign of revival, the fashionable religion, so to speak, of the day. Men and women formed themselves into companies, and marched together to the building of a new church, with banners carried before them. Knights and nobles yoked themselves to carts to carry stones to the new edifice. The utmost splendour of worship of course was the natural consequence of the erection of these splendid edifices, for lofty naves and beautiful choirs were not built to be left in nakedness like vast sepulchres. Images of saints and angels, in all the warmth of colour and gilding, peopled them on high,<sup>2</sup> and the long train of splendid vestments moved in glittering order amongst the worshippers. This was all as it should be in secular churches, nay, it was well even in monasteries if this graceful and glowing external life of religion was not too busy for the interior and hidden life of the soul. The two schools need not have clashed, but that they did so is certain, for these ancient monasteries found fault with the new school, which arose amongst them on the grounds that there was a real opposition between an austere life and spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Fordun, vii. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Quo sanctior eo coloratio St. Bern. Apol. ad Guil.

joy, and that a splendid external religion was essential to internal devotion. They were perhaps conscious that it was so in themselves, and so they attacked their younger brethren, telling them that joyousness and love were essential to religion, and were incompatible with the great austerities which they practised.

Aelred's *Mirror of Charity* therefore is intended to reflect an image of the love of God, the conception of which had been so strangely disfigured. "The love of God," he says, "is the Holy Spirit within us." Considered as a habit in our souls, it is a perfect union of our will with that of God, so that we wish for nothing but what He wishes. It is not feeling, it is not intellect, it is not joy, it is not reasoning ; it is this ineffable union with God, who is not an idea, but a real living God, the source of all joy and all intellect. As man however has fallen, this love must be raised out of the death of nature, and this was the reason of the Cistercian austerities ; they were means to an end, to set up the cross of Christ within the soul, and they were useful as far as they procured the perfect resignation of the will. And how can this be effected, asks the Cistercian, where all things tend to dissipate the mind and expend its energies on external things, when in the cloister are found picturesque animals to amuse the eyes of the brethren ; quails and curious birds, tame hares gambolling about, and stags browsing under the trees.<sup>1</sup> There is the same dissipation when the walls of monastic churches are covered with paintings of men and horses fighting, and pagan stories taken from classic history, when the pavement is of marble, covered with rich carpets, and the worship is carried on with a glare of

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 23, 24.

wax lights, amid the glitter of gold and silver vessels ; or when again, instead of the grave and masculine Gregorian chants, languid and effeminate music was used, or else the loud organ imitated the crash of thunder to the wonder of the gaping crowd below. "Meanwhile," says Aelred, "the crowd stands trembling and astonished, wondering at the sound of the bellows, the clash of cymbals, the harmony of pipes, yet when they look at the contortions of the singers and their imitation of female voices, they cannot help laughing. You would fancy that they had come not to an oratory, but to a theatre, not to pray, but to a spectacle. They fear not that tremendous majesty near which they are brought, they have no reverence for that mystic manger, at which they are ministering, where Christ is mystically wrapt in swaddling-clothes, where His most sacred blood is poured in the chalice, where the heavens are opened and angels are standing near, where earthly things are joined with heavenly, and men are the companions of angels."

The love of God consists not in these external things ; it does not consist even in the joys of the interior life, but in the conformity of the soul with the passion of Christ, in the crucifixion of the whole man. The soul must patiently wait upon Him, not forcing itself to feel joy and sorrow, but resting in faith upon God, ready to be filled with His joys, when He wills, and willing to remain in spiritual dryness as long as He wills. "Nevertheless," says Aelred, <sup>1</sup>"who so presumptuous as to affirm that communion with the passion of Christ is incompatible with His Spirit, and lessens the grace of spiritual sweetness. He is joined to Christ's passion,

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 6.

who bows himself beneath the discipline of the cloister, and mortifies his flesh by fasts, labour, and watchings, who submits his will to another's judgment," and who, when tried by internal temptations, which are more severe than any corporal mortifications, commits himself into the hands of the Lord to suffer what He wills. He must not be ever looking out for miracles to prove his acceptance as was the case with many in those days, he must wait quietly for consolation from on high.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup>" But when the soul is in this state, beset with fear, harassed with grief, cast down by despair, swallowed up by sadness, grieved by spiritual sluggishness, there will come down upon it a drop of wondrous sweetness, from the unguent of that copious mountain, that high-raised mountain : noiselessly and peacefully it drops down upon the soul. At the brightness of its radiant light, all that cloud of irrational feelings melts away ; before its sweet taste, all bitterness disappears, the heart expands, the hungry soul is fed, and it feels within it a strange upward power, which seems to bear it on high. Thus by fear sloth is kept away ; and by the taste of heavenly sweetness, fear is tempered. Lest the soul should be content to remain in a low and sluggish state, fear rouses it ; but if it faints in its labours, it is sustained by its feeling. By these alternations it is continually schooled, till the whole soul, absorbed by that ineffable love, burning for the long-desired embrace of Him who is fairer than the children of men, begins to wish to be dissolved and to be with Christ.<sup>3</sup> But know well that, if ever the mercy of Thy Creator pour upon thee a single drop of His sweetness, it depends not on thy will, when it should come to

<sup>1</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 15.

thee, nor in what way, nor how much thou canst keep of it. When thou hast tasted this spiritual sweetness, be not straightway sunk down in sloth, for soon there will rise up by thy side a spiritual enemy, and he is not to be conquered by sloth, but by prayers. Then after numberless contests, thou shalt be taken on high to receive thy reward, and thy soul will enter into the glory of God, where thou wilt be fed with the fruit of the promises. The fire of heavenly love will burn up the yoke of earthly concupiscence, and thou shalt rest in the brightness of wisdom, in the sweetness of heavenly contemplation, and know of a truth that the yoke of the Lord is sweet and his burden light."

Such was Aelred's doctrine, and he had soon need enough of resignation to the will of God, for while he was engaged in writing this work, his friend Simon died. So full is he of his grief that he quits his subject, and pours his heart out in expressions of grief. His mirror of charity is a home-book ; it was meant for the cloister, and for brethren to read. In one place he tells us that he had offended one of the brethren in the morning, and how the thought of it grieved him. And now that he had lost his friend, it seems to have been a relief to him to put all his thoughts on paper. For eight years Simon had been suffering from ill health ; and for a whole year, foreseeing that his end was approaching, he had withdrawn within himself, and seemed forgetful of all external things, "even of me," says Aelred. It appears that he had been sent away from Rievaulx, probably for his health, and Aelred was not with him when he died. His body however was brought to his own monastery, and Aelred had just come from his funeral, when he wrote these words, "O grave, where is thy victory ? O death, where is thy

sting ? Where thou seemest to have done him some hurt, there thou hast exalted him. Upon me then has all thy venom been expended, and in aiming at him, thou hast inflicted dreadful wounds upon me. It is on me, that has fallen all the grief, all the bitterness, all the sorrow ; for the guide of my path, the rule of my conversation has been taken from me. But how is it, O my soul, that thou didst so long look upon the funeral of thy sweet friend without tears ? Why didst thou let that beloved body go without kissing it ? I was in sorrow, and with sobs I drew long sighs from my breast, but I did not weep. The object before me called for such intense grief, that I thought that I did not grieve at all, even when my grief was most violent ; at least so I can tell on looking back. So great was the stupor of my mind that I could not believe that he was dead, even when I saw his body was laid out for burial. But now that stupor has given way to feeling, to grief, and suffering. And are my tears blameable ? Why should I be ashamed of them ? Am I the only one to weep ? Tears, groans, and sobs are all about me. But Thy tears, O Lord Jesus, are the excuse for ours, those tears which Thou didst shed for the death of Thy friend, expressing a human feeling, and proving to us Thy charity. Thou didst put on, O Lord, the feeling of our infirmity, but it was, when Thou wouldest ; therefore Thou mightest have not wept. Oh ! how sweet are Thy tears, how grateful ! how they console me ! How they drop with sweetness on my harassed soul ! Behold, say they, how He loved him. Yea, behold ! how my Simon was loved by all, was embraced by all, was cherished by all."

Truly the white monks were not an hard-hearted race, as appears from this touching picture of a monk's



funeral. The world does not so regret its friends, at least if we may judge from the cold, heartless things that funerals are. But we must now accompany Aelred a little way into this same world to another death-bed. It was one of bitter grief to him, and yet it had its comfort too. We have all this while lost sight of the Saxon priest with whom we began this narrative, Eillan, Aelred's father, the priest of Hexham ; and it is only by accident that a document has been preserved to us, from which it appears that Eillan was taken ill at Durham, and repenting on his death-bed of the unlawful possession which he kept of the property of Hexham, sent for the prior of the canons, and also for Aelred and two other sons, whose names are thus known to have been Samuel and Ethelwold. William, Abbot of Rievaulx, also came, and in their presence, and with the consent of his sons, he formally gave up into the hands of the prior all the lands of the Abbey which he had kept ; and in token of this donation, he gave Robert a silver cross, containing part of the relics of the Saints of Hexham. Probably Aelred's consent, with that of his brothers, was necessary to make this transaction legal, and it must have been with joy that by this renunciation, he cleared his family of the guilt of sacrilege, which had so long hung over them. His father, when his illness grew worse, took the monastic habit in the Abbey of Durham. "He lived a few days longer in strict self-examination, contrition of heart, and mourning for his sins, and after having received the body of the Lord to help him in his passage from life to death, he breathed his last."

This glimpse of Aelred on the brink of his father's grave, is the last which we catch of him as a simple monk of Rievaulx. It took place in 1138, which was

the year of the battle of the Standard. When we meet him again it will be in another capacity.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

### *The World in the Church.*

AND now we must again quit the cloister and go forth into the world, and this time it will not be the noisy world of knights and barons which was battling outside the walls of Rievaulx, but the ecclesiastical world, in which a more deadly war was waged during that part of Aelred's life which remains. It will thus appear what dangers Aelred escaped by taking refuge in the haven of the cloister from the sea of ecclesiastical politics. It will also be seen how necessary to the church was a reform like the Cistercian, of which one of the first principles was to give up the politics of the world, and by which Abbots were forbidden to become judges, and to frequent courts of law, or even, except in particular cases, to hold communication with the court of Rome.<sup>1</sup>

A struggle was now beginning different in character from any which had gone before. In the former contests, there appear Saints on the one side, and the world on the other. But here we have civilians and

<sup>1</sup> V. Inst. cap. Gen. part i. c. 58, de placitis and 84, Nullus scribat domino Papæ nisi pro propriis causis et coabbatum suorum et episcoporum, archiepiscoporum, regum et principum suorum. No privileges were to be obtained from the Holy See by particular Abbots, c. 31.

canonists, men of business and politicians among churchmen, as well as in the world. Law comes in instead of broad principle, or rather principle takes the shape of law. Nearly at the same time two young monarchs ascended the thrones of England and of Germany, Henry and Frederic. Both were remarkable men. Henry was a good specimen of the Plantagenet race ; never would his restless soul leave his body quiet. All day long he was on his feet, whatever he was doing, whether at mass or at council ; although his legs frequently gave him pain from the many kicks which he received from the fiery chargers which he bestrode.<sup>1</sup> He hardly ever sat down but on horseback, the saddle was his only throne ; from one part to another of his vast dominions he hurried, rolling every where his dove-like, deceitful eyes. But if any thing aroused his anger, then it was terrible to look upon him, for his large round eyes seemed to shoot fire on all around him. Not so his imperial majesty ; inexorable and inflexible he was ; so that on the very day of coronation at Aix-la-chapelle, one who had offended him fell at his feet in the very cathedral, thinking that then kings' hearts are disposed to mercy, but he turned away, and would not look at him.<sup>2</sup> When the clergy of Tortona quitted the beleaguered town with cross and banner, and came to him in procession with naked feet to beg for mercy, he was unruffled and undisturbed, and sent them back with a bitter smile, to live on horse-flesh or to die of famine.<sup>3</sup> Still he does not seem to have had the terrible fits of passion which burst forth from Henry. He was an indefatigable warrior like

<sup>1</sup> Peter of Blois, Ep. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Otto, de Gestis Frid. ii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Otto, ii. 19.

Henry ; but it is not clad in mail and on horseback that we think of him, it is rather seated on his throne on the plains of Roncaglia, dispensing kingdoms with a sword, and provinces with a banner.<sup>1</sup> The sceptre suits best his imperial hand, as the sword, the large, hard ungloved hand of Henry.<sup>2</sup> Pride was the besetting sin of the Hohenstauffen, and passion of the Plantagenet.

Yet however different they were, they agreed in this : both were men of law and zealous administrators of justice, and both endeavoured to swallow up the church in their reforms. Henry's aim was to extend justice through his dominions by means of his new division of circuits and judges. Frederic's was rather to centralize justice and to make himself its head across the Alps, as he had done in Germany. His aim was wider than Henry's ; it extended through all the intricate details of fiefs and arriere-fiefs : the maxims which he studied were those of the imperial court of Constantinople. They involved a theory broad and comprehensive, taking into its extensive range, not only Germany and Italy, but all the world. Wide as was the theory of Innocent III., that of Frederic Barbarossa was its match without its religiousness. Of the two swords given to St. Peter, he claimed one, as the Head of the Church claimed the other, using the same text, without reflecting that he spoiled the illustration, for he at least could not be the successor of the Apostle. Frederic claimed his throne as the successor of Charle-

<sup>1</sup> Est consuetudo euriæ ut regna per gladium, provinciæ per vexillum tradantur. Otto, ii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Nunquam, nisi aves deferat, utitur chirothecis. Peter of Blois, Ep. 66.

magne. The old Roman empire was by no means supposed to be dead ; it was considered to be continued in Constantinople, and Charlemagne claimed it on the ground that the Imperial line of Constantinople had failed, and it was time that the empire should return to the West.<sup>1</sup> When afterwards Frederic passed by Constantinople on his way to the East, he would not meet the Greek Emperor, for he was himself the Emperor of Rome ; his Eastern majesty was but the Emperor of New Rome. Head of the Holy Roman empire was his title, and his obsequious prelates were not afraid of the utmost conclusions, which such a title would warrant.<sup>2</sup> Sole Emperor of the world is one of the titles by which the Archbishop of Milan addresses him in a speech delivered on the Roncaglia. Even kings acknowledged his greatness : our own Henry says in a letter to him, “let the will of the Empire be done wherever our dominion extends.”<sup>3</sup> It is true that Henry had a point to gain, and words it is well known cost nothing to him, whom a cardinal legate once called the greatest liar he had ever known ; still they must have meant something, not to appear preposterous.

But the great support of Frederic were his legists of Bologna.<sup>4</sup> One day the emperor was riding on a fine horse with two great Doctors of law one on each side of him, Doctor Bulgarus and Doctor Martin, and he asked them whether he was by right lord of the world. Master Bulgarus answered that he was not, as far as the property of it went ; but the cautious Martin said that he was. “Then the lord emperor,” says the

<sup>1</sup> Palgrave's Anglo-Saxon Constitution, p. 490. 506.

<sup>2</sup> Radevic. Frising, ii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Radevic. i. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Baronius in ann. 1158.

chronicle, "when he came down from his palfrey, presented it to Martin." Here in the introduction of Doctor Martin and his colleagues we have the characteristic of the whole contest in Germany as well as in England. William Rufus had summary methods of proceeding, rude and simple modes of spoliation ; but Henry was a more refined tyrant ; he set up for a lover of justice and a reformer of law, and so he was, when it suited him. Besides brute force, for that was not wanting too, he fought with appeals, and sentences of suspension and excommunication. But the times were not ready for so much refinement ; it was only the commencement of the new system, and he had to spill the blood of a martyr before he had done. The struggle however between Church and State in England had not reached its height in Aelred's time, and it is not mentioned by him in his writings ; while that between Frederic and the Church is known to have occupied his attention. We will therefore cross over to the continent and see how the chief ecclesiastics of the day, the spiritual rulers of Christendom, were employed, while Aelred was serving God in peace at Rievaulx.

There was something great about Frederic ; when he crossed the Alps, to extend his power over Italy, he declared that he came not as a conqueror, but as a lawgiver ; his speech to the diet was a noble one,<sup>1</sup> and his attempt to pacify the deadly feuds of the cities was praiseworthy. He gave a written feudal law to Italy which it had not known before ; but he committed the same fault as Henry. The church was to be centralized and drawn within the circle of the empire ; the property of the sees to be treated like that of the baron as imperial fiefs, inalienable without the

<sup>1</sup> Radevic. Frising, ii. 3.

consent of the emperor, the lord of the soil. And in all this it is remarkable how the civilian every where comes into the contest ; instead of the old and dignified watch-words of the contest, investiture by ring and sceptre, or by pastoral staff, there now appears all the jargon of feudal finance, *fodrum*,<sup>1</sup> and *regalia*, fiefs and allodial lands. The spirit of the struggle was however the same as we shall see as it goes on. Even in the time of Eugenius differences arose between the aged pontiff and the young monarch. Frederic had constituted himself the arbiter between rival candidates for the see of Magdeburg, a dispute which an ecclesiastical tribunal only was competent to decide. Eugenius died before the matter could be settled, and his successor Anastasius was weak enough to concede the point. It was a bad lesson for Frederic ; it destroyed the awe that men had for the inflexibility of the Holy See in a just cause.

Such was the state of affairs when Anastasius died after a short pontificate ; and Hadrian IV. succeeded him in the See of St. Peter. It was a joyful day for England when news came that the cardinal Bishop of Albano was supreme Pontiff, for he was an Englishman, of genuine Saxon blood, Nicholas Breakspear. He was the son of a man in a low rank of life, who became a monk of St. Alban's. The boy was brought up in the cloister, but when he became a candidate for the noviciate, the Abbot would not receive him. It was not every one who could be admitted into the lordly Abbey of St. Alban's. Much however could not be said for the discernment of Abbot Robert, for the next meeting which he had with the poor Saxon boy, was when he came to Rome on the business of his Abbey, and found

<sup>1</sup> *Fodrum* means the duty of supporting the Imperial army.

his rejected novice in the chair of St. Peter. The Abbot brought with him a considerable sum of money, with three mitres, and sandals worked by Christina, prioress of Margate. But Pope Adrian would not receive the money ; he said with a good-humoured smile, "I will not accept thy gifts, for once on a time thou wouldest not have me for thy monk, when I came to beg the habit of thee in all charity." Since he had left St. Alban's, he had become prior of the canons of St. Rufus, and then as cardinal legate of the Holy See, he had been sent into Norway to form the Church among that nearly converted nation. In these ungenial regions, amidst this wild people, he passed many years, and when he came back to Italy he left a church, flourishing with monasteries, and a holy clergy where he had found a wilderness inhabited by a half heathen population. Such was the reputation which he acquired for purity of life and prudence in managing ecclesiastical affairs, that on the death of Anastasius he was raised to preside over the Catholic Church. It was at a dangerous time, when the empire was arousing itself, and the church was on the eve of a contest, at which St. Gregory might have trembled. The times were changed since St. Gregory's death ; the world had grown accustomed to the great doctrines which he had vindicated, and they had now thoroughly worked into the feelings of Christendom. In another respect however matters were less favourable ; St. Gregory had formed his school about him, and his cardinals co-operated with him ; but since then affairs had become matters of precedent and custom at Rome, and the Pope often found himself obliged to act against his judgment, from the preponderance of one party or another in the Sacred College. There was at this time



an Imperial party amongst the Cardinals, and Hadrian found himself hampered by them.<sup>1</sup>

Hadrian did not at first come into direct collision with the Emperor. Frederic had yet to receive the imperial crown at his hands, and was on his good behaviour. When he appeared at Rome with his German army, the Pope and the Emperor had a mutual enemy to fear, the turbulent people of Rome, and much blood was shed on Frederic's coronation day. All however passed off happily as far as Hadrian was concerned ; the sole thing which tended to disturb their peace, was the hesitation of Frederic to hold the stirrup of the Pope, when he mounted his horse. Hadrian in his grave calm way said, "Since thou hast not paid me the honour which thy predecessors have paid me, I will not receive thee to the kiss of peace."<sup>2</sup> Frederic simply took the matter as one of custom and ceremonial. He went in a business-like way to work, looked into old records, and examined as witnesses those who had been present at the crowning of Lothaire, and finding that Hadrian was right, he complied. It was a piece of ceremony, like the kiss of the Pope's feet, very significant certainly, for it implied that the Head of the

<sup>1</sup> Repugnabant enim Cardinales illi qui addieti erant imperatori et non nisi quod ipsi placere scirent probandum putabant : in reliquis autem se adversarios objiciebant. Quod sæpe factum ab eis in maximum Romanæ ecclesiæ detrimentum. See the grave words of Baronius in ann. 1155, 23. If it had not been for the opposition of the German party to the terms offered by the king of Sicily, Hadrian would never have been in the awkward position at Beneventum, which forced him to make concessions to Roger.

<sup>2</sup> See Life of Hadrian in Muratori. Rer. Ital. Scrip., tom. iii. 443.

Church on earth, was above the Head of the Empire ; still it had nothing to do with individuals, and his Imperial majesty did not think himself degraded. But a serious cause of offence soon followed, which arising, as it did, from an apparent trifle, showed that two opposite principles were at work and might break out any day into open war. Hadrian sent to the emperor two legates, cardinals Roland, chancellor of the Holy See, and Bernard, to demand the liberation of a prelate who had been maltreated and detained prisoner by some German noble on his way from Rome. In the course of his letter the Holy Father had reminded Frederic how he had bestowed upon him the Imperial crown, and professed himself to be ready to grant him greater benefits.<sup>1</sup> Now it happened unfortunately that the Latin word for benefit, also signifies benefice or fief ; and hardly were the words out of the mouth of the official who read the letter to the emperor, when his Imperial majesty took fire, and all the princes of the empire rose up in anger. Was then the only emperor in the world, the head of the feudal hierarchy himself a vassal ? Was the Holy Roman empire itself a fief ? The notion was intolerable ; and when cardinal Roland innocently asked, “ Who then did bestow the crown on the emperor ? ” one of the fierce nobles around drew a sword, and would have struck him if Frederic had not interposed. The fact was, that the question was an awkward one. If Frederic’s lofty theory was true, if he was the imperial Head of the Christian world, where did he get the title ? To one like Frederic, dis-

<sup>1</sup> It seems absurd to suppose that Hadrian meant to claim the empire as a fief. What greater fiefs were there in the world to bestow ?

posed to make it any thing but an empty title, and above all who professed to reduce it to theory by his legists, and to draw inferences from it, the question was one which stared him in the face. Frederic could only ground his title on the fact that Charlemagne, some three hundred years before, had received the Imperial crown from Pope Leo one Christmas day in St. Peter's. The power of granting this crown resided in Rome, such was the theory of the times ; so much so that the mock senate of Rome claimed it, and Frederic had to choose between the sacred Head of Christendom and this self-constituted assembly. This theory was enough to justify the greatest pretensions to rule over temporal princes that the Pope ever made ; and since that power resided in one who was Christ's Vicar on earth, we need not wonder that the nations bowed before it. We may look upon it now calmly and dispassionately, for the power has passed away and is not even asserted ; and without taking fire like Frederic and his princes, we may say that in as far as it could be carried out, it was true. The fact that it could be exercised was its justification, and it might be well if the nations had Christ's earthly representative to be to them a living impersonation of justice, and to step in when earthly and material power is of no avail.

The idea was therefore by no means so preposterous as might be imagined ; besides some kingdoms were acknowledged fiefs of the Holy See. However this may be, Hadrian did not in this case lay claim to this power ; he mildly answered Frederic that he was surprised that he should misinterpret his words, and that 'beneficium' meant benefit, as well as benefice ; so the storm cleared away for the present from the imperial brows. But nothing external would keep the peace

between two such elements as the Church and the world. The empire of the Church can hardly be defined ; in one sense it has no earthly rule at all, and in another it bears rule wherever there are men who have souls to be saved. Wide therefore is its dominion as is the empire of conscience, and thus in one sense the whole world comes under its jurisdiction. But this kingdom, strong as it is, depends entirely on a conscientious basis ; when therefore the conscience is vitiated or misinformed, it at once put itself in opposition to the Church. In this way then there can never long be peace between two such powers, unless one is recognized to be above the other. All this is true in the abstract ; but the battle between the Church and the world is hardly ever fought directly on these grounds ; but on a much grosser and more material battle field. And this was especially the case in the struggle between the Hohenstauffen and the Popes. In process of time the Church acquires rights and property, and these in a certain sense circumscribe, because they serve to define her power. Besides which they make her open to attack, by giving her points to defend, for which she cannot fight without the appearance of ambition. She must needs mingle in worldly policy, and appear externally like one of the powers of the world. Church property looks just like any other property, and if a Bishop possesses land, why should he not do homage for it ? If it is recognized and defended by the law, it becomes subject to the law. So reasoned Frederic. And while he was about it, he thought he might as well make laws about ecclesiastical property as any other. The Bishops in Italy were possessed of great power in the cities ; they were often temporal princes, and he could

not be sure of the fair cities of Lombardy without keeping them under. He therefore required the act of homage and oath of fealty from a Bishop as he would from one of his own nobles. When Hadrian remonstrated with him, he answered with a curious mixture of history and imperial theology, while the legist of Bologna evidently inspires the whole. Hadrian's letter begins with saying that the divine law bids us honour our parents. Frederic answered by quoting, "The law of justice, which gives every man his own. From his ancestors did he get his crown, but what had Silvester in the time of Constantine? Whatever that popedom of theirs possesses, it obtains from the liberality of princes." And then came the text about "rendering unto Cæsar all that is Cæsar's," and an exhortation to humility. At another time when Hadrian complained about the occupation of Episcopal palaces by himself and his retainers, he answered with a quotation from the digests that the soil was his, and therefore so was all that was built upon it.<sup>1</sup>

All this will at least serve to mark the character of the contest; it was the world's law in its process of formation, striving to draw into itself, and to neutralize the Church. If it had succeeded in merging the jurisdiction of the Church into its own, St. Gregory's work would have been undone. It was not however till after Hadrian's death that the Emperor's designs became apparent, for then broke out one of the most audacious acts of schism that ever attempted to divide the Christian world. In the conclave held for the election of the Pope, a large majority of the Cardinals united in favour of Roland, that same Chancellor

<sup>1</sup> Giesler, i. 52.

of the Holy See, who excited Frederic's anger by his untimely question. He had already been robed in the purple mantle in which the new Pontiff was presented to the people of Rome, when Cardinal Octavian, supported by two other Cardinals, pulled the mantle off him. A senator who was present snatched it out of Octavian's hand, who then proceeded to robe himself with another mantle, which he had brought with him for the purpose. Unluckily, however, he put on the hind part of the mantle foremost, so that the hood hung down in front ; then the doors were thrown open, and thus accoutred, he presented himself to the people, amidst a band of armed men, while the Cardinals, with the real successor of St. Peter, fled into the church to hide themselves. The instinct of Christendom saw through the transaction, and recognized Alexander, for so Roland was now called ; even Henry II.'s good sense led him right all through the struggle, and though he threatened great things in the height of his contest with St. Thomas, he remained faithful to Alexander. And now the designs of Frederic became apparent ;<sup>1</sup> he wished to have a German instead of a Catholic Pope. A Pope there must be, and let him be infallible too ; nay, the more infallible the better, provided he is but the servant of the empire. Sovereigns were ready enough to acknowledge the Papal supremacy to the utmost, when it suited their purpose, when they had a new kingdom to conquer, or a weak title to strengthen. It was only when he came in their way that they wished to be rid of him. So now Frederic called together a council at Pavia ; it consisted but of the

<sup>1</sup> De amissione imperialis curiæ timebat. Acta Alex. III. Muratori 3. 452.

bishops of the empire, and so he could safely talk of his rights as successor of Constantine, and quote the emperors who had exercised the right of convoking councils. The upshot was, as might have been expected, that Victor, for so Octavian had called himself, was judged to be Pope. But this council was a failure ; Alexander was too wise to submit his cause to any council whatever ; he was Pope and could not be judged ; besides which the Christian world had already decided by sending in its adherence to Alexander. Frederic saw that he was foiled, and next tried to entice the good Louis of France to a conference, to decide on the elaims of the two claimants. Louis had been so far taken in as to promise to meet the Emperor ; but Frederic unhappily asserted in the course of the negotiation, that only the Bishops of the empire had the right of judging a cause respecting the election of a supreme Pontiff, his imperial majesty being the especial defender of the Holy See. But Louis smiled at this novel doctrine, and said, " Does not the Emperor know that our Lord when on earth bade Peter feed His sheep ? And are not the French Bishops a part of the flock which the Son of God has committed to Peter ? " And so saying, Louis " turned his horse's head disdainfully, and flew to arms with his barons and the rest of his forces ; " and back went the Emperor, with all his men, and would not wait to confront the Fleurs-de-Lis. The times were not yet come when the world could take in the idea of a French Pope and a German Pope.

It is not our purpose to follow the struggle to its close, to show how the Lombard league was formed, how the Tuscan league, the army of the Church, joined it, and how after many a hard battle by land and by

sea, Frederic at last, in St. Mark's cathedral at Venice, threw himself prostrate at Alexander's feet, and the Pontiff raised him with tears in his eyes, and the Te Deum was entoned for joy. But the contest lasted for many a long year, during which Alexander had conflicting interests to settle, and a line of policy to pursue ; at the commencement of the whole contest he had to embark for France with all his train ; and little was the peace that he could enjoy with two contests on his hands, one with Henry of England, the other with the Emperor.

Little indeed was the supreme Pontiff to be envied in his high dignity ; and for this conclusion, like John of Salisbury, we have high authority. There remains on record a conversation which took place between two frank hearted Englishmen, one on the throne of St. Peter, the other brought close to it by his position. Considering that one of the interlocutors was Hadrian, the only Pope who was English born, the dialogue is unique, and forms a fitting moral to this chapter. "I call to witness," says John, "Lord Hadrian, that no man is more wretched than the Roman Pontiff, no condition more miserable than his. If he had nothing else to vex him, the labour alone would make him sink." He had gone through every office in the Church, from the very lowest, and every step brought an accession of bitterness ; and yet all former bitterness was joy compared to what he felt on the thorny chair of St. Peter. Well might the crown and the mitre shine with brilliancy, for they were of fire, and burnt the brow of the wearer. And in another place, John tells us how Pope Hadrian begged of him to tell him what men thought of the Roman curia, and how he bluntly laid bare what was one cause of Hadrian's difficulties, the universal



outcry against the exactions and avarice of the court of Rome. Doubtless Hadrian was in part right when, with a smile, he answered his rough monitor by quoting the old fable of the body and its revolted members. The administration of the ecclesiastical offices of Christendom could not be carried on without extensive resources. The whole array of expectatives, mandates, and oblations, might be excused on the ground that it was necessary that the Pope should have a certain number of benefices to give away, just as a prime minister cannot carry on the government without the exercise of patronage. All this is true, and the governed are ever apt to overrate the faults of their rulers : but it is also true that the voice of St. Bernard had hardly disappeared from the earth, and he had cried out “ O ambition, the cross of the ambitious, how is it that thou art a torment to all, yet all love Thee ! Ambition rather than devotion wears the pavement of St. Peter’s ! Does not the papal palace echo to its voice every day ? Is not the whole laborious discipline of law and canon administered for its gain ? Does not Italian avarice gloat over its spoils with insatiable avidity ?”<sup>1</sup> This of course proves nothing as to the rights of the Holy See, nor did it interfere in St. Bernard’s mind with the ideal of the father of Christendom, “ the hammer to beat down tyrants, the father of kings, the moderator of laws, the dispenser of canons.”<sup>2</sup> Nor does it prove anything against individuals ; the character of Hadrian himself has never been impeached, and even John of Salisbury, with his hand on his heart, declares, “ Never have I seen more honest clerks than in the Romish church.” But it does prove that all the inconveniences of an ex-

<sup>1</sup> De Con. iii. 1.<sup>2</sup> De Con. 4 fin.

tensive system belonged to the Roman See. The Pope must be a man of business ; he must be vexed with the complaints of his subjects, and the evil of his ministers ; and the Cardinals and great men of the church must be men of action and politicians. And now that we have drawn the moral that we wanted from this narrative, we will go back to where we left Aelred in 1138, and see what he was doing while all this was going on in the great world.

---

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *The Cistercian Abbot.*

SILENTLY and rapidly did the Cistercian order spread in England ; first came Waverley, and so retired and solitary was its situation, that its existence was unknown to their brethren in the north, and they were astonished to discover that there were white monks in England besides themselves.<sup>1</sup> Rievaulx, Tintern, and Fountains came next, and from them issued communities which spread over the face of the land ; and this silent rise of the houses of St. Mary in England, is the only redeeming feature of Stephen's miserable reign. "At that time," says William of Newbridge, "when the whole strength of the regal power was gone, the power-

<sup>1</sup> Battle of the Standard, ap. Twysden. Waverley was founded in 1128, according to its annals. It never rose to the importance of Rievaulx ; in 1187 it had but a hundred and twenty lay-brethren and seventy monks, while Rievaulx, within ten years after its foundation, had three hundred brethren, though the proportion of the lay-brethren to the monks does not appear.

ful men of the realm, each, according to his means, continued to build castles, either to defend their own or to overrun their neighbours' estates. At this time then when evil was rife through the weakness of king Stephen, or rather through the devil's malice, the great King of Heaven by His wisdom and Providence, gloriously stepped forth in a marked way to put down the king of pride, by erecting such castles as befit the King of peace. For, many more monasteries of servants and hand-maids of the Lord are acknowledged to have risen up during the short time of Stephen's reign, or nominal reign, than during the hundred years before."<sup>1</sup> It seemed to be the only sign of religion left among the nobles, and it was a source of great comfort to men of restless habits continually exposed to great dangers, when they thought that their monks were praying for them while they were engaged in their perilous wanderings.<sup>2</sup> William, of Albemarle, declared that he always slept soundly about cock crow, whether under his tent or on the wide sea, because he knew that then the bells of his Abbey of Melsa were ringing for matins ;<sup>3</sup> and at another time, John Courtenay, when in great peril of shipwreck, bade the sailors be of good cheer, for his Cistercians of Ford were at that moment praying for him. The poor people too loved "the hooded folk, who spent a part of their time in prayer and the service of God, and the rest in the labours of the field like rustics."

In the year 1143, William, Earl of Lincoln, came to the Abbot of Rievaulx, to beg of him to send a colony of monks to Revesby, one of his estates in Lincolnshire.

<sup>1</sup> William of Newbridge, 1, 15.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale, 5, 393.      <sup>3</sup> Dugdale, 379.

The Abbot complied, and sent Aelred, with twelve monks, to take possession of the new ground assigned to them ; and so he left the valley of Rievaulx, about five years after the time when we left him at Durham, standing by his father's death-bed.<sup>1</sup> It was a place of no great dignity this Abbacy of Revesby, but it was one which required consummate prudence. Each new community was an experiment, and when the founder had given a certain quantity of wood and meadow, the monks had to shift for themselves, and to clear their way by felling trees and building habitations, as a settler would do in the woods of America. There was plenty of marsh in this domain, for special permission is given to the monks to build where they please in the marsh ; and from these words of the charter, it is not very hard to guess that Aelred's occupations at this time were principally cutting down wood and draining a Lincolnshire fen.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the picture which we thus get of him, axe in hand, working in his tunic and black scapular is not very dignified ; and he must often have regretted Rievaulx and his novices ; but monks do not choose for themselves, and all was gain to him for Christ's sake. One good however he got from his Abbacy of Revesby ; he had there advanced into the country of the Gilbertines, for fens seem to be the territory of the order of Sempringham, as mountains of Benedictines, and valleys of Cistercians. And here probably he became acquainted with St. Gilbert, for

<sup>1</sup> Dugdale says that the annals of Lowth give 1143 for the foundation of this Abbey ; and the annals of Peterborough though they assign it to 1142, yet say that it was in the pontificate of Celestine II., which was in 1143.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale, v. 454.

“Gislebertus de Semplingham” is mentioned as one of the witnesses to a charter belonging to the Abbey. He was not however more than two years at Revesby, when he was called away to a much higher sphere.<sup>1</sup> In 1145, William, the first Abbot of Rievaulx, died, and brother Maurice was elected in his stead. It was not long, however, before the new Abbot judged himself unfit for his dignity, and resigned his charge. Richard of Hexham says, that he did so for the glory of God. He doubtless found that he made a better monk than Abbot, and retired. It was a harder thing to be an Abbot in those days than may be imagined. On his resignation, the monks bethought themselves of their former master of the novices, the Abbot of Revesby, and so they elected him Abbot of Rievaulx.

Now since there were various sorts of Abbots in the middle ages, we must classify them before we can know where, or under what species, to place Aelred. There is of course the grand division of good and bad, but this is far too wide for our purpose. There was the hunting and hawking Abbot, a character rife in Saxon times, but as yet rare in England since the Conquest. And then there was the political Abbot, he whose shaven crown and thoughtful face might be seen at parliaments and hustings,<sup>2</sup> a man in high favour with kings and nobles. He often had a private exchequer, appropriated the convent money, and sent presents out of

<sup>1</sup> The chronicle of Melrose puts Abbot William's death in 1145. Simeon, of Durham, appears to give 1146 as the date; his words may, however, mean that William died in 1145, and that Aelred succeeded in the course of the next year, the short interval being occupied by Maurice.

<sup>2</sup> John of Salisbury.

it to the king and queen.<sup>1</sup> “Now a days,” says Aelred, “what market, what court of justice, what council can go on without monks?” These Abbots however were not always bad, and of the good sort was Suger, the great Abbot of St. Denis. Besides this, there was the negligent Abbot, the good easy man, who sat in his abbatial lodgings, entertaining seculars instead of associating with his own monks, and asking them to dinner at his table as he ought to have done; he cared not though the master cellarer and officials of the convent pawned the convent money to Jews;<sup>2</sup> and he let monastic discipline go to ruin by allowing the monks in the infirmary to talk as they would, so that the brethren pretended to be sick when they were not, and by giving dispensations to the brethren, and allowing them too many pittances on feast-days. And there was the tyrannical Abbot,<sup>3</sup> who despatched the brethren who were obnoxious to him to distant cells, and kept them there all their lives, who, instead of consulting “the nobility of the convent,”<sup>4</sup> its men of rank, the prior, the cellarer, and the sacrist, chose to surround himself with young men and novices, and act without advice. And then he would appropriate the property of the convent, and give the lands to enrich his family.<sup>5</sup> But on the whole Abbots who were imperfect without being absolutely bad may be divided into two classes. First, there was the Abbot who gave so much time to contemplation and prayer as to neglect his duties, and to make blunders from not knowing the resources of the Abbey; as did John, Abbot of St. Alban’s, who pulled down a large

<sup>1</sup> Matt. Par. Vitæ. Abb. St. Albani, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. Par. 114. Cronica Jocelini, p. 2    <sup>3</sup> Matt. Par. 112.

<sup>4</sup> Matt Parr, 102.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. Par. 102, 113.

portion of the church, and found that he had no money to build it up again.<sup>1</sup> It was indeed very necessary that the Abbot should look after the property of the convent, for instances occurred in which a convent was entirely deserted by its monks, simply because their property was not enough for their maintenance, as happened to the Abbey of Pipewell, in Northamptonshire. It once stood in the midst of beautiful woods, which formed a principal source of its revenue.<sup>2</sup> But by the negligence of some Abbots, and the misconduct of others, the woods were fast thinned and destroyed; whole trees were burnt in the huge chimneys in winter time, powerful persons who wanted timber for building helped themselves from the trees, and bad Abbots cut down the stately oaks to pay their debts, till the poor Abbey was left shorn of her leafy honours, "like a bird stripped of its feathers." Besides, if the Abbot did not keep a sharp look out on his grounds, his neighbours were sure to encroach upon him. So it did not do for the Abbot to be absorbed in contemplation, and to neglect his business. Secondly, besides this class, there is another much more extensive, and this consists of the Abbots, who were so attentive to the secular affairs of the convent as, externally at least, to appear like worldly men. These were the sharp, shrewd, keen-eyed men, who esteemed the honour and comfort of the convent as their own, ready to fight with king or bishop for the privileges of the house. Such an one would journey to Rome to procure exemption from episcopal authority, with his pockets well lined with marks of gold and silver for the cardinals.<sup>3</sup> An Abbot must be

<sup>1</sup> Matt. Par. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Dugdale, vol. 5, 4, 31.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. Par. 71.

eloquent and ready, so as to preach dignified sermons to the people in the church ; he must not be too learned or too spiritual, and the men that he loves are not the good, humble monks, but men like himself, who make good officials for the convent. Yet he must be irreproachable in his morals, that none speak evil of the convent. A stately figure he must be, to set off the jewelled mitre, and the curiously wrought dalmatic, and the pastoral staff. In fine, he must be such an one as to please the monks of St. Edmund, whose prayer was, when they wanted a new Abbot, "From good clerks deliver us, good Lord."<sup>1</sup> He would form the very beau ideal of him whose general rule, on an election, was "that we choose not a very good monk, nor yet an over-wise clerk, neither one too simple nor too weak, for I know that some one has said, '*Medio tutissimus ibis.*'"

Aelred belonged to neither of these classes ; he was rather the Father Abbot, than the Lord Abbot. The Cistercian idea of a superior was, that he should be the spiritual director of the whole convent. What Aelred had been to the novices, he now was to the three hundred brethren of Rievaulx, with the additional accession of a dignity marked rather by its influence, than by the external signs of magnificence common in other orders. His office was a laborious one, and he who was made Abbot was considered, in comparison with the simple monk, to be taking the part of Martha rather than that of Mary. Many a time when he would rather have been on his knees in the Church, had Aelred to listen to the detail of the spiritual wants of the brethren. Little do they know of monastic life who suppose that all temptation was over as soon as

<sup>1</sup> Cronica Jocelini, p. 11.



the gates of the monastery had closed upon the monk, and shut him out from the world. "Ah ! brethren," said Aelred, in one of his sermons to the convent, one Christmas season, "of those who are just come from the world, some are unlearned and simple-minded, others erudite and subtle, some bound by the habits of vice, others, though sinners, yet free from all crime, some brought up in luxury, others worn down by a hardy life, some slothful, others active, some of such a temper as to feel scarce any temptations to impurity, others tempted by the least thing, some of a fiery temper, others naturally mild. It is necessary then to study the state and the temper of every one who flies hither from the world, to know what is hurtful to each, and to point out to him the best refuge from his enemy. Some are to be kept away from all external employment, others from the society of this or that man, others are to find a covert under a strict silence from the burning heat of anger, others must be taught to cure their lusts by coarse food, others are to be preserved from a restless spirit and a wandering heart by labour and watchings, others are to be sheltered from the attacks of evil spirits; by psalms and prayers, by meditation and reading. In every case an Abbot must offer to each vice, by which those under him are attacked, the proper treatment which experience tells us, is opposed to it."<sup>1</sup> This was Aelred's occupation.

They were great schools of spiritual life these first Cistercian convents, wonderful realizations of the Book of the Imitation of Christ. Aelred knew all the stages of the religious life of the soul, and could classify and arrange them as a physician would states

<sup>1</sup> Serm. in Isaiam, 28.

of the body. "The first step," he says, "is, that a man flying from the world and eschewing all vice, should shun all worldliness.<sup>1</sup> Then in all obedience let him submit himself to his superior, and let him purify himself, and in hunger and thirst, in watchings and labours, in poverty and nakedness, take vengeance on himself for all that his memory taxes him with, and so must good habits be set up in the place of bad. Thus in the nest of discipline must he remain, till he be full fledged, and have the wings of virtue wherewith to fly, for never can he rule, who has not first learned to obey. And then purified from vice and adorned with virtue, let him pass on to the study of the scriptures, and there he will receive illumination and gain wisdom. And when he shall have learned in the scriptures to refer all his life and knowledge to the love of God and of his neighbour, then on the two wings of wisdom and of love, borne up to the mount of contemplation, let him learn to form this earthly tabernacle after the pattern of the heavenly. The first step then is conversion, the second purification, the third virtue, the fourth knowledge, the fifth contemplation, the sixth charity. And these perchance are the six steps to the throne of Solomon ; if any one strives to sit thereon, without having trodden them, he will mount, not to take his seat there, but to fall headlong." In another place, by a more accurate division, he mentions three stages,—Conversion, Purification, and Contemplation ; and in this last stage, "the soul purified by spiritual exercises, passes on to heavenly contemplation and meditation on the Holy Scriptures. Then does virtue begin to grow sweet to it, vice to be loathsome, and it tastes how sweet the

<sup>1</sup> Serm. in Isaiam, 28.

Lord is.<sup>1</sup> In the first of these stages, fear, proceeding from the thought of God's justice, purifies the soul; and when it is purified, wisdom illuminates it; and after this illumination the goodness of God rewards it by the infusion of His sweetness."<sup>2</sup>

Strange is this early germ of the threefold division of the progress of the Christian soul into the Purificative, the Illuminative and the Unitive life, which was drawn much more fully many hundred years after by another Saint. Aelred here shows us the spiritual exercises of the twelfth century. And it was this system of which he was the administrator at Rievaulx. Like a good shepherd, with his pastoral staff in his hand, he ruled his flock, bearing the weak ones in his bosom, and helping all with his gentle voice to escape the jaws of the lion, who goes about seeking whom he may devour. How much he loved them appears in every word of his writings. Many slight vestiges there are of his conventual history, scattered up and down in his works, scanty glimpses of struggles and pains which he participated with his spiritual children. How they rejoiced when they could chat with him alone, away from the Philistines who took up his time, as they called the strangers who came to him on secular matters! How familiarly they talked to him, not fearing to use words of playful raillery with each other in his presence, for it was his maxim that the soul required relaxation at times. They ventured to speak to him of his friends, how one had taken offence at him for some trivial cause, how in times when he was falsely accused, one friend who lived beyond the seas, had remained faithful to him, while even another

<sup>1</sup> Serm. in Isaiam, 31.

<sup>2</sup> De Jesu puero. 493.

friend, the Sacristan of Clairvaux, had taken part against him.<sup>1</sup> Each of these slight hints contains a whole history of feelings and affections which has now perished ; but one thing we can see, that he was still the same Aelred, always looking out for some one to love, and one young monk was especially beloved by him, called Ivo, and for him probably he wrote that most beautiful treatise of his on Jesus,<sup>2</sup> when a child of twelve years old in the temple. But the Lord would not let him love Ivo too well, for this young monk died before he had been long at Rievaulx. But even more than for the bodily death of his disciples did he mourn for their spiritual death ; one especially, there was a promising brother, who fell we know not how ; nor should we know any thing about him, if Aelred did not hold up the fall of this nameless brother as a warning to the convent in one of his sermons. And his love descended to more minute particulars, for he condole with his brethren for the loss which they one year sustained by the destruction of a flock of sheep,—a serious loss for the farmer monks, who lived by the sale of the wool.

It must not however be supposed that Aelred's life was altogether as quiet as it might at first sight appear. He was sometimes obliged to be my lord Abbot as well as his neighbours. The late Abbot of Rievaulx had been obliged to make a journey across the Alps, and to appear at Rome in favour of St. William's deposition. Aelred's journeys did not, however, lead him so far from home. On the death of Henry Murdach, St. William was installed at York, without any opposition from the new Abbot. Aelred had however many voyages across

<sup>1</sup> De Spirit-amri. iii. 453, 460. et passim.

<sup>2</sup> De Jesu puero duodenni.

the sea to the general Chapter of Citeaux. But even without going to Burgundy, he had matter enough to employ him at home. The Abbot of Rievaulx was head of the Cistercian Abbots in England, and sometimes causes came before him judicially. In 1151, he decided a cause in favour of the monks of Byland, who after many troubles had at length obtained a settlement. The poor brethren had been expelled from their convent by the Scots, and had been refused shelter by the Abbey of Furness, their mother house, and had managed to find a home on the other side of the Rye, so near Rievaulx that the bells of each convent might be heard from the other. This was, however, contrary to Cistercian discipline, and they again removed to Byland. There they were in a flourishing state, and had not only built themselves a church, but also a parochial chapel in an out lying valley, for the use of which they had generously sent one of the bells of the convent in a waggon.<sup>1</sup> When lo ! the Abbot of Furness, after treating them so inhospitably, claimed jurisdiction over them, and the cause came before Aelred, who decided it in favour of his poor neighbours of Byland. But not only by his own order, but by all the monasteries around him, he was consulted in cases of difficulty. In some of the later years of his life, it cannot precisely be ascertained which, he was called to Watton, to pronounce on the well-known case of an inmate of the convent, who had fallen into sin.<sup>2</sup> The only question which was asked him was, What was to be done with the wretched penitent, under the extraordinary circumstances ? Aelred, as appears by his writings,<sup>3</sup> was no

<sup>1</sup> Dugdale, 5, 351.

<sup>2</sup> V. Life of St. Gilbert, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> Spec. Char. ii. 24. And also Serm. 4, p. 37.

friend to monks who were ever on the look-out for miracles, but in this case there was no choice between accusing the nuns of a wicked fraud, or believing the truth of miracle. Aelred found that he had reason to believe that the nuns were holy women, and thought the latter alternative by far the less difficult. He had pity on the wretched sinner, and when the prior wrote to him to ask whether she should be punished any more, he answered, "What God has cleansed call not thou common, and what He has Himself absolved do not thou bind."

In the Lent of 1153, he went on a journey which was ever memorable to him. The business of his order took him into Scotland, and he saw king David for the last time in his life. David had founded no less than four Cistercian Abbeys in Scotland, it is therefore not at all unlikely that Aelred should have often seen him since he became Abbot ; and it must have been with a fearful joy that he revisited those scenes from which so many years before he had fled as if for his life. Many a change had taken place, both in king David and in himself, since he had left Scotland. And on this, his last visit, he missed a face which had ever welcomed him with beaming eyes. Henry, the heir of the crown of Scotland, the brave soldier, and accomplished prince, had died the year before, to the irreparable loss of Scotland. With his devoted piety and enlightened understanding, he would have been a fitting match for the Henry who was just about to mount the English throne. Aelred had left David in the beginning of his reign, full of schemes for the improvement of a realm, which was flourishing under his care ; now he found him a penitent and a mourner, bound down by grief, yet resigned to God's will. He acknowledged that the death of his

son was a fitting punishment, sent by God for having let loose the savage Galwegians on the north of England. So poignant had been his grief, that had it not been for the entreaties of his whole realm, bishops and nobles, he would have given up his crown and sceptre, and retired to a convent. When Aelred left him, he seemed to have a presentiment that they should never meet again on this side the grave, and he embraced him fondly and shed tears when they parted. A few months after, at the end of May, shortly before the Ascension, news were brought to Rievaulx that David had died as he had lived, a holy death. Aelred mourned for his friend and benefactor with the poignant grief which was natural to him. In the first burst of his sorrow he wrote a sketch of the good king's character, and afterwards sent it to one for whom he then felt a great anxiety and love, to Henry, who had mounted the throne of England, David's grand nephew.

It is interesting to see the light in which the Abbot views the young king ; and truly Henry might well be an object of solicitude to every thoughtful man. He was the most powerful prince in Europe, in the flower of his age, and gifted with talents and the will to extend his power. Henry began well ; near the place of his landing was a church, into which he entered to pray, and at mass he came forward to receive the kiss of peace from the priest. His policy soon showed that he meant to restrain the power of the nobles, to show justice to all, and especially to favour the peasants and the burghers of the towns. In the very month of his coronation, the election of Adrian to the papal throne seemed to promise a happy concord between the English Church and state. Aelred then might well look with fondness and hope on the young king. Henry's

vices had not yet developed, and Aelred, with the sanguine and trusting temper which made him unable to conceive the possibility of fraud in the convent of Watton, invested the young king with all manner of virtues. He looked upon him as the destined restorer of the old English line to the throne of England, the line of Edward the Confessor, which the Abbot had never ceased to love. He applies to Henry an old prophecy, ascribed to St. Dunstan, and rejoices "that England has now a king of English blood, and bishops and abbots, princes, and good soldiers." He fondly draws out "from ancient chronology," the genealogy of Henry, through his English mother and English kings, "even up to Adam, the father of all mortals ;" and he holds up, as a model to him, his great ancestor Alfred, and David, whose death he was mourning, "whose pure hands had made him a belted knight." At the same time, with a keen anticipation of Henry's dangers, he drops various hints about submission to the Church ; "how the blessed Alfred thought that the great dignity of kings consisted in having no power in the Church of Christ, and how he imitated the example of Constantine, who said to the bishops, 'It belongs not to me to judge of priests.'" Henry's latter days, troubled as they were with the rebellion of his sons, and stained with the blood of a martyr, would not have been so different from his religious landing, when, high in hopes, he threw himself on his knees in the little church by the seashore, if he had attended to Aelred's warning.

A part of the Abbot's exhortation to Henry was, that he should watch over the interests of the royal family of Scotland ; and this portion of the homily he neglected, as well as the rest. Henry, when he was made a knight by David, had sworn to leave the Scottish king and his



heirs in peaceful possession of the domains which they held of the English crown. He, however, outwitted David's successor, the young king Malcolm, who was no match for his unscrupulous suzerain. The young prince was the son of Henry, the friend of Aelred's youth. From the simplicity and purity of his character he was called the maiden king ; and of him St. Godric said, that Malcolm and St. Thomas were more acceptable to God than any men between the north and the Alps.<sup>1</sup> For both these reasons Aelred loved him, and was enabled to do him a service which Henry's armies could never have effected. When Malcolm returned from France, whither, with a boyish ardour for war, he had accompanied his cousin Henry, he found his nobles every where in revolt, war in the wild clans of the Highlands, and war in Galloway. His people did not like his intimacy with the English monarch, and Malcolm was almost looked upon as a foreigner. He, however, quelled the rising of the Highlands, and expelled the savage inhabitants of Moray, and substituted for them some of his more peaceable Lowland subjects ; he reduced his revolted nobles, and Galloway alone remained. In three pitched battles he beat these tur-

<sup>1</sup> From the connexion which undoubtedly existed between Whiterne, the See of Galloway and St. Aelred, it seems exceedingly likely that he persuaded Fergus to retire, though the writer of the life in Capgrave mixes up two events together. It is certain from Fordun, 8. 4., that Fergus did take the habit of a canon at Holyrood, but the dissensions which took place in his family to which he refers, did not happen till after Aelred's death, in the reign of William. Fordun, 8, 25, 39. The revolt of Fergus occurred soon after Henry's expedition to Toulouse, probably in the year 1160, which is the date given in the Chronicle of Holyrood. Ang. Sac. i. 161.

bulent Galwegian clans in one year, and the country was reduced to a precarious state of peace. But the cause of the evil still remained, and unless he could have expelled the people, as he had done those of Moray, it seemed likely to remain. The people were the remnants of the ancient Picts, and resisted all the efforts of the Scottish king to civilize them. Vice seemed so thoroughly engrained into their character that even Christianity had not expelled it. An Abbot of Rievaux, however, might venture amidst the savage tribes of Galloway ; Aelred's name was well known all over the border, and even the vicious chieftains of the country felt awed by his simple dignity. It is not known what special cause took Aelred into Galloway. The old bishopric of Whiterne had just been re-established, and the regular canons, who had been introduced, had a great love and reverence for him. He had certainly visited them, and had written the Life of St. Ninian, the founder of the See. It seems that he even knew the dialect of this wild region, for the original life of the Saint was in their language. At all events, all Scotland had heard of the holy Abbot of Rievaux, who had once been high steward to king David ; and Fergus, the chieftain of Galloway, knew very well who he was when he saw the white habit approach this mountain fastness. Aelred negotiated a permanent peace with the dangerous chief. This was a strange diplomacy, but a most successful one. Fergus surrendered himself into the hands of Malcolm, but instead of being put to death for his revolt, he was allowed to take the habit of a canon in the monastery of the Holyrood, at Edinburgh.

This is almost the last of the scanty notices of Aelred's life which have been left on record. In the

same year in which he rendered this signal service to Scotland, occurred the council of Pavia, and in his sermons to the brethren in the Advent of that year, he mourns bitterly over the miserable schism which was dividing the Church, and declares his unshaken adherence to Alexander. The whole Cistercian order was interested in the contest, for their brethren in Germany were suffering persecution at the hands of Frederic for their fidelity to the rightful successor of St. Peter. There is a deep and almost prophetic melancholy about the words of Aelred to his monks, when he applies the words of the prophet Isaiah to his own times, "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." "Ah ! brethren," he says, "the Lord hath created two great lights in the firmament of the holy Church, the priesthood and the kingdom. The greater light is the priesthood to rule the day, that is, spiritual things ; the lesser light is the kingdom, to rule the night of worldly things. It is an unnatural thing if the sun rule the night, if the priest should draw over the clear light of his conscience, the night of worldly matters ; or if the moon should rule the day, the king should meddle with the administration of the sacraments." And thus in words rather of sorrow than of anger, he bids the bishops of the time remember St. Dunstan and St. Cuthbert. The contest between Henry and the Church had not yet begun ; St. Thomas was not yet Archbishop ; but in Aelred's mournful words, in which he asks the courtier prelates of the time, how they could be martyrs who were ambitious and ashamed of poverty, it might seem as if he foresaw how in time of persecution they would fall away, as indeed they did. And again, in the same sorrowful

manner he speaks of the kingly power, "Then shall the moon be turned into blood when the hands of the prince are full of blood, when they take away the right of the just man, and follow not equity, but their own lusts and anger." Both Henry and the prelate, to whom these sermons are dedicated, Gilbert Foliot, the memorable Bishop of London, might have taken warning by these words.

Aelred, too, in the same discourses, takes a long farewell of his brethren, as he was setting out to the general chapter of the year at Citeaux. He seems to feel that his life was precarious, and he bids his children pray for him, for it is my wish, he says, to lay down among you the tabernacle of my flesh, and pour out my spirit in your hands, that you may close the eyes of your father, and my bones may be laid in the grave under your eyes." He wished that his tomb, with his crosier sculptured on it, should catch the eyes of his brethren, that they might say a prayer for Abbot Aelred, as they passed it in chapter. Aelred might well fear when he was going on so long a journey, lest he should never see Rievaulx again ; for many years before his death, one account says ten, he was afflicted with a terrible chronic disease, apparently the stone. He did, however, return from Citeaux, and lived for six years after this journey ; but they were years of pain and of living death. Very little is known of this period of his life except that he suffered, and that he died. He does not appear to have given up his functions, at least in the commencement of his disease, for the journeys both to Galloway and to Burgundy come within the period of his sufferings ; and to the last he seems to have been able to celebrate mass, but at times his pains were most

acute. One account represents him as sitting on a mat before the fire, with his head between his knees, bowed down with pain ; and during the year before his death, after celebrating mass, he used to remain for a whole hour on his bed, unable to speak or move. Still his spirit rose above his wasted and emaciated body ; he spent his time in constant prayer and meditation on the Holy Scriptures. He had said before, in sermons preached in the beginning of his disorder, "Brethren, I tell you, no misfortune can I suffer, nothing sad or bitter arise, which by the opening of the Holy Scriptures cannot be made to vanish, or be borne with greater ease. How often, sweet Jesus, does my day turn into evening ; how often does intolerable pain, like the darkness of night, succeed to the feeble light of consolation. All things become tasteless ; all that I see is a burthen to me. But I go to meditate in Thy fields, I turn over the sacred page, then does Thy grace, sweet Jesus, drive away the darkness with its light, do away with weariness, and then do tears succeed to groans, and heavenly joy follows tears." St. Augustine's Confessions was also always in his hands ; tears were ever flowing from his eyes, and his thoughts were ever fixed on his Lord, for whom he had given up all things earthly. It was no wonder, that while he thus only held to earth by a body which was a perpetual crucifixion to him, the brethren, as they passed the cell of their father, heard his voice speaking, and other voices answering, which by their sweetness they took to be those of angels. At length, about the feast of the blessed St. Laurence, whose martyrdom he had so long imitated by his patient endurance of excruciating pain, his loving and gentle spirit was released from its sufferings, to the presence

of Him whom he had seen on earth, reflected, however darkly, in the glass of love.<sup>1</sup>

When the news of Aelred's death came to the Abbey of Swineshead, in Lincolnshire, Gilbert, the Abbot, was preaching on that verse of the Song of Solomon, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse ; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice ; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey ; I have drank my wine with my milk." Gilbert was Aelred's friend, and knew him well, and broke forth into these words, "Large and copious is that honeycomb, which in these days has passed to the banquet of the Lord, I mean the lord Abbot of Rievaulx, news of whose death has been brought to us, while we are commenting on this passage. Methinks that in him, now that he has been taken away, this garden of ours has been laid bare, and a large bundle of its myrrh has been gathered by the Lord, its husbandman. No such honeycomb is now left in our hive. Who more pure in his life, more wise in his doctrine ? Who more suffering in body, more unwearied in spirit ! His mouth, like the honeycomb, poured forth the words of honied wisdom. His flesh

<sup>1</sup> 1166 is the common date given for St. Aelred's death ; but the Chronicle of Melrose gives 1167 ; and in the account of Byland Abbey, given in Dugdale, it appears that the year 1197 was the thirtieth year after his death. He is commonly said to have died on the 12th of January, but the reason of this is probably because his festival was appointed for that day ; no contemporary authority fixes it to that time, while Gilbert, of Hoyland, in a sermon delivered in the octave of the feast of St. Laurence, says that St. Aelred had died "in these days," and that the news had just reached him. It should be added that in a martyrology put out by Benedict XIV., St. Aelred's feast is appointed to be kept in March.

was sick with a lingering disease, but his soul within him dwelt with a lingering love on heavenly things. While his flesh, on fire with pain, was burning like myrrh, his soul was on fire with a flame, fed with the precious gum of charity ; and both together rose up in a perpetual incense of unwearied love. His body was shrivelled and wasted, but his soul was filled with marrow and fatness ; therefore will he ever praise the Lord with joyful lips. His mouth was like an honeycomb, dropping honey, for with his whole soul on his lips he used to pour forth the calm feelings of his heart, with his countenance serene, and his measured gestures indicating inward peace. His intellect was clear, and his speech thoughtful. He was modest in his questions, and more modest in his answers. Patiently did he bear with those who were troublesome, although himself a trouble to none ; and while he was acute in seeing what was wrong, he was long before he noticed it, and patient in bearing it. Often have I seen him, when any of those who sat near him broke rudely on his words, suspend what he had to say, till the other had wasted his breath ; and then when the rude torrent of wearisome speech was passed, he would take up again his words where he had left them off, with the same calmness as he had waited. He was swift to hear and slow to speak. Not that he could be said to be slow to wrath, for he had no wrath at all. A sweet honeycomb was he of whom I speak, overflowing with the honey which was within. His mind was full of cells, and he dropped his sweetness everywhere, from the comb where he had stored up matter for what he said ; and many men are living still who have tasted of his sweetness. In his doctrine he looked not for that wearisome subtlety which has more to do with

disputation than instruction. Moral science was what he studied and put out in elegant words ; he was well versed also in the language of the spiritual life, which he was wont to explain among those who were perfect. His doctrine was milk for the consolation of the simple, with which, however, he often mixed the wine of words, which rejoiced the heart. So did his teaching, though simple as milk, carry away the hearts of his hearers as though they were drunk with the wine of spiritual gladness. We must mourn that such a man has been taken from us, but still we may rejoice that we have sent forth such a bundle of myrrh from our poor gardens, to the garden of heaven. There he is now an ornament, who was a help to us upon earth."

This is a portrait of St. Aelred, for so we may now call him, drawn by one who knew him, while the recollection was fresh upon him. It may help us to get a clear idea even of his features, pallid and drawn as they were by sickness ; and at all events it gives a vivid picture of his mind, pouring itself out in little offices of love, notwithstanding his pains of body. Every history and every tradition presents the same idea, and marks him as the holy and loving Abbot, well skilled in healing hearts broken by grief, or wounded by sin. Others come down to us as holy Bishops, Martyrs, or Confessors, but St. Aelred was pre-eminently the Abbot of England.



## CHAPTER IX.

*Cistercian Teaching.*

THOUGH we have now gone through the life of St. Aelred, as far as time has spared it, and we may look upon the blessed Saint as having gone to his rest, yet in one sense he still lives to us, not only by his intercessions but in his writings, which have remained to us. He is the great Cistercian writer of England, and in this point of view we have still to look upon not only himself, but the whole intellectual movement of which he was a portion. At first sight, it would seem as if Cistercians had little or nothing to do with literature or philosophy. It was by giving up worldly studies that both St. Bernard and St. Aelred became Cistercians ; and philosophy was a portion of the sacrifice which they made to God on assuming the white habit.<sup>1</sup> St. Bernard left the schools of Chatillon to go to Cîteaux ; he had there been the best poet in the school,<sup>2</sup> and the many quotations from the classics found in his writings, show what he really had given up in sacrificing his taste and intellect to religion ; and the same was the case with St. Aelred. The only case in which a Cistercian was allowed to pursue regular studies, after becoming a monk, was, that of Otto<sup>3</sup> of Frisingen, and he, when he became a princely Bishop,

<sup>1</sup> Vit. St. Bern. lib. i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Berengar. Apol. St. Bernard often quotes Persius.

<sup>3</sup> Otto never misses an opportunity of bringing in metaphysics in his History of Frederic Barbarossa. He evidently

retained much more of the seion of the house of Hohenstauffen, than of the pupil of St. Stephen. It is remarkable too, that the scholars at Paris at first listened unmoved to St. Bernard's eloquence, and to the rough syllogisms which he propounded to them on their violation of God's holy law ; Mount St. Genevieve and Citeaux seem from the first to have been in secret opposition.<sup>1</sup> Still the Cistercian reform seemed likely to go on its own way, without clashing directly with the schools, had not St. Bernard been forced out of his cloister of Clairvaux, to oppose the rationalism which was dominant within them, in the person of Abelard. Europe might have anticipated its history by four centuries had it not been for St. Bernard. Abelard's was not a clear and distinct heresy, which could be put in a tangible shape like the Arian or Nestorian. It was a wide-spreading rationalism, sound only by accident on any point, and claiming exemption from all condemnation, on the ground that it was only one way of putting Christianity. It was no heresy, was its plea, but a bright and dazzling display of intellectual activity. The human mind had just awakened from a long sleep, and had become more philosophical. It had learned not only its Horace and its Virgil, but its Aristotle too, and it must not be stinted in the use of its newly-found treasures.

Now it was true, to a certain extent, that the twelfth century was the beginning of a new intellectual era ;

thought that Gilbert de la Porée had been harshly treated. It should be said for him that he died at Morimond, and on his death-bed protested his submission to the Church in all that he had said about Gilbert.

<sup>1</sup> Exord. Mag. b. vii. 13. and Vincent of Beauvais quoted in Manriquez in ann. 1122.

things immediately before it had been dark, not that God had ever suffered His truth to be darkened in His church, but that it was many centuries before the barbarians, who had seized on the Western empire, had leisure to spare for learning, sacred or profane. The Church had enough to do to teach them the faith. She had to fight hard to prevent herself being merged in the body politic, into which, with desperate throes, society was forming itself. But when once that struggle was over, and the crosier was clearly separated from the sceptre, then began a more fearful struggle. Men had leisure to philosophize upon the faith which they had learned, and just at that time a great revival of ancient learning took place. Aristotle and Plato symbolized for them what had lain undeveloped in their minds ; here were categories formed, and genera and species classified. They thought that they had got a new organ for the discovery of truth. It was a new field, like an unknown world, a crusade into the regions of thought. The syllogistic form was given, and matter was all that was to be found. They were not slow in finding it ; there was matter enough for dispute in their new philosophy itself. Poor human nature ! hardly had it obtained possession of its new treasure, when it began to doubt of its reality. There were genera and species in plenty ; but how far were they the real representation of external objects, or only our way of viewing them ? It was an important question ; it was asking in fact whether our idea of external things was the true one ; or in the words of modern philosophy, how much was objective, how much subjective truth. But Clairvaux and Rievaulx had nothing to do with either Realism or Nominalism, and we pass them by. As long as the schools

confined themselves to metaphysics, their din probably did not even reach the Cistercian cloister. But in the middle ages, men were not Realists and Nominalists by halves, many of them pushed their principles into their notions of the Blessed Trinity itself. It was a fearful moment for the church. Here was humanity exulting in the discovery of a class of truths which it had forgotten. It was leaping with somewhat fantastic gestures about its new domain, when it came across it to enquire whether it was quite lawful ground. Certain it was that Nominalism, when applied to the highest Christian doctrine, became a sort of Sabellianism,<sup>1</sup> and Realism took the form of a new and nameless heresy. Here then was truth, as they thought, meeting truth face to face, and the fear or doubt presented itself with which they were to side.

At this juncture, there arose a man who attempted to reconcile, after his fashion, the Church and the intellect of the age. This man was Peter Abelard, who is to be considered as the personification of the bold and restless acuteness of the schools, as well as of the worldly-spirited clerks of the time.<sup>2</sup> This novel doctor was a canon of the Church, and at the same time a gay and handsome cavalier, whose love-songs and dialectics were equally in fashion. His first exploit was to banish from the schools the Realism which he found there. All was plain and easy to him; the ideas of the soul were but arbitrary classifications emanating from itself; they were real as conceptions, but nothing more. In this way it would follow, that rationality

<sup>1</sup> Petavius calls it the heresy of the Nominalists.

<sup>2</sup> Heloise says to him, *Quid te Canonicum et Clericum facere oportet. c. vii. Hist. Calam. Tanti quippe tam nominis eram et juventutis et formæ gratia preeminebam, ut quameunque sæ-*

was no more the essence of man than the power of laughing, and that it was only in our way of looking upon it, that either could be the differentia of the class.<sup>1</sup> Abelard gained his point ; he completely won the day, and beat his master, William of Champeaux, out of the field ; but he did not see that like all other Rationalism, his system introduced a scepticism far deeper than itself. He did not see, that come what may of it, our ideas are the way in which we view the external world, and if they are merely arbitrary, and not in some way a representation of the truth, then we know nothing of any object beyond ourselves. However, as yet, he was but the bold and successful innovator, the idol of the schools, the triumphant logician ; but when he afterwards hid his head in the cloister of St. Denis, when Heloise, with bitter regrets for the world which she was leaving,<sup>2</sup> had taken the veil at Argenteuil, then the conceited logician became the dangerous theologian. He must needs remodel theology ! the old school was worn out.<sup>3</sup> It was founded

*minarum nostro dignarer amore, nullam vererer repulsam. c. vi. Quorum etiam carminum plerisque adhuc regionibus decantantur. Ibid.*

<sup>1</sup> Abelard seems to say this when he makes each individual to have his own form, for instance, in the language of the times, he makes *Socratitas* to be the form of Socrates. This is true in one sense, but he seems to deny that *humanitas* is in any real sense, his form and he makes a separate form for each part, *rationalitas*, *bipedalitas*, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Tua me ad habitum traxit passio, non Dei dilectio. Ep. 4.*

<sup>3</sup> He tries to prove by the example of St. Paul that difficulty of faith is a merit. *Cito autem sive facile credit qui indiscrete atque improvide his quæ scivit prius acquisivit quam hoc in quod persuadetur ignota ratione quantum valet discutiat an adhibere ei fidem conveniat. Introd. ad Theod. 1060.*

on faith ; Plato and Aristotle would laugh at such a religion, and Abelard was ashamed of it. He would have a new religion founded on irrefragable argument, to suit the philosophic mind.<sup>1</sup> Thus he strove to allay the sudden recoil of his contemporaries upon themselves, the fright of humanity balancing between its reason and its faith. Two great schoolmen made shipwreck of their faith ; this he was not disposed to do, for with his great and glaring faults, his overweening conceit, and his whole soul still scarred with sins, and as yet, unhealed by his forced repentance, still, to do him justice, he would have been orthodox if he could. He therefore wished to make out that faith and reason were identical. He bade the youthful schoolmen, the men of march of mind, go on and prosper. There was no cause for alarm. The Christian was after all the great logician, and faith only an intellectual opinion about things unseen.<sup>2</sup> They need have no divided love between Aristotle and Christianity. Plato indeed was a Christian and a much better one than Moses and the Prophets, for he had foreseen and made out for himself the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Abelard is continually inconsistent with himself, often using orthodox language, and protesting that he means nothing against the faith of the Church, while his words are glaringly opposed to it. On his inconsistency, see St. Bernard's Letter to Innocent.

<sup>2</sup> Abelard Op. vol. i. 3, 28. Ed. Amb. Verbum Dei quod Græci λόγον vocant, solum Christum dicimus. Hinc et juxta nominis etymologiam, quicumque huic vero Verbo inherent vere Logici sunt. In another place, Charitas Dei per fidem sive rationis donum infusa. Introd. ad Theol. 1027.

<sup>3</sup> Dum multum sudat quo modo Platonem faciat Christianum, se probat Ethnicum. St. Bern. de err. Ab. c. iv. v. Martenne Thes. nov. Aneed. 5. p. 1152.

Oh, foolish Abelard ! he did not know what he himself was doing. If the human intellect could make out the blessed truth for itself, how knew he that it was not the creator of it ? How knew he that the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity itself was not an emanation from the mind of man, framing to itself its own conception of the supreme good ?<sup>1</sup> If he had looked on a few centuries, he would have seen in the same way a certain philosophy make out, that the existence of God might be but the product of the human intellect at play with its own notions. But intellect itself would have told him that such matters were not within its jurisdiction ; it can mount up indeed through earth and heaven up to the nature of God Himself ; but it can only say that such things as it conceives, may be. To rule that they are, is not its office. And so almost by the force of reason, Abelard was compelled to say that in his Introduction to Theology he did not profess to give the truth, but only his opinion of it. His Theology was a mere intellectual exercise, a keen encounter of wits, like a disputation in the schools. Faith itself he defined to be an *opinion* on things unseen. It happened to Abelard as might have been expected ; his reason broke under the gigantic task, like an inapt instrument

<sup>1</sup> Abelard does seem to say so of the Holy Trinity. Videtur autem nobis suprapositis personarum nominibus summi boni perfectio diligenter esse descripta ; ut cum videlicet prædicatur Deum esse Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus, eum summum bonum atque in omnibus perfectum hac distinctione Trinitatis intelligamus. Introd. 1, 7. It may, however, be said of Abelard, that in other places he neutralizes what at first sight seems Sabellianism. The language of a late biographer of St. Bernard, who almost makes Abelard his hero, is more unequivocally wrong.

applied to a work which it was never meant to perform. In the attempt to explain the doctrines of the Church in perfect conformity with human reason, he explained them away.<sup>1</sup> By another natural and almost logical consequence of his attempt, he not only shook the certainty of the faith, but he erred grievously in his exposition of it. And no wonder, authority to the theologian is what axioms and postulates are to the mathematician. It contains the data, without which he cannot stir a step. He then that would enfranchise theology from authority, must enfranchise Christianity from revelation ; and freedom from the Church in theology is like freedom from numbers in arithmetic. If Abelard had, on throwing away authority, become a sceptic, he would at least have been consistent ; but to throw it away and to expect to do as well without it was folly indeed.

Abelard was half conscious of his inconsistency, and felt it necessary to defend himself. How can we believe, he says, what we do not understand ?<sup>2</sup> The Church, by putting its doctrines into words, presents them to our understanding, and the Holy Fathers have used similes and metaphors, so as to bring them down to the level of our thoughts and to confute reasoners. Why then might not the phraseology and the metaphors be perfect expressions of what they meant, if they were to be used at all ? And this was what he attempted to do ; he tried to make ecclesiastical phra-

<sup>1</sup> Existimatio non apparentium. *Introd. ad Theol.* p. 977, 1061. Non tam nos veritatem dicere quam opinionis nostræ sensum quem efflagitant promulgare. p. 974, v. also 1047.

<sup>2</sup> Quid ad doctrinam proficit, si quod loqui volumus exponi non potest ut intelligatur. 985.



seology more intellectual, under the notion that unless it was a perfect expression of divine things, it must be false. And he proceeds to attack St. Augustine, St. Hilary, and St. Anselm, for using imperfect metaphors on the subject of the Trinity and the Incarnation.<sup>1</sup> But the blessed Saints knew far better than Abelard, how imperfect were their words ;<sup>2</sup> but they had to choose between saying that truth was unattainable, or that it was attainable as far as we can bear. The comparisons which they used were not mere metaphors, but a tracing out, in the creation, of shadows and types, of which God is the reality and the antitype. So too, human terminology, even though used by the Church, can but most faintly express the nature of the Incomprehensible Godhead, which eludes the grasp of words and ideas. And yet words are expressions of ideas, and ideas are expressions of the truth. Categories are the laws of our thoughts, and every man knows what he means when he uses the terms Substance and Relation. They are our way of viewing things, but they are real though they are ours. Much more when used of the everlasting God are they real and objective. God is a Substance in a higher and truer sense than we can know, and the eternal Relations between the Persons of the adorable Trinity are not mere notions of our

<sup>1</sup> Of St. Anselm he has the impudence to say, *St. Anselmi similitudo suffragatur hæresi.* 1085.

<sup>2</sup> *Tendebam in Deum et offendi in meipsum.* St. Ans. Prolog. 1. *Ego certe scio quam multa figmenta pariat cor humanum, et quid est cor meum nisi cor humanum.* de Trin. 4, i. *Jam de iis quæ nec dicuntur ut cogitantur, nec cogitantur ut sunt, respondere incipiamus.* De Trin. 5, 4.

minds, but real and true in a transcendent sense surpassing all human thought.

Abelard therefore was wrong in supposing, that because ecclesiastical phraseology was imperfect, that therefore it was false. On the contrary, since God is incomprehensible, Abelard's notion of the divine nature was necessarily false, since it pretended to be perfect. Again, he could never be sure that in adoring God, he was not in reality worshipping his own conception of the Deity, for on his own showing it might be an idea created by his intellect. But St. Augustine and St. Anselm knew that they were adoring the one true and right conception of Almighty God, which they had received from without, from the Holy Church who had embodied it in words. They therefore had a right to reason upon the faith, which Abelard had not ; for he had no data on which to philosophize. Their aim was to make the faith of the Church as intellectual, as that which is above intellect is capable of being ; Abelard tried to reduce it to the perfect level of the intellect, and after having fused it in this earthly crucible, he found that it had become, not the faith of the Church, but something else. But the Saint of Hippo might be bold, for he had long contemplated and adored the ever-blessed mystery, and he knew by loving faith that his burning heart looked not on an abstraction. The idea which he had received from the Church had grown upon him in beauty and intensity the more he had looked upon it. He therefore knew well what he did, when he answered the opponents of the blessed truth by reasoning. He bade them look on their own souls, and see whether they understood themselves ; and after confounding them with their ignorance of their own nature, he bids them

not despair.<sup>1</sup> Human nature is indeed a mystery, and yet it is the image of God. It is not a mere simile, but it is a true representation of God ; imperfect but not unreal. It contains within itself a trinity, a faint shadow of the everlasting Trinity ; yet shadow though it be, it does give us a true insight, as far as it goes, of the adorable mystery. And after all his efforts the Saint sinks upon his knees, and confesses his inability to comprehend this mighty Truth. So too St. Anselm ;<sup>2</sup> if by reason alone he professed to seek for God, it was because he knew that he had found Him already. To every word that he used he communicated the intensity of his own idea, so that they ceased to be mere words, and received a reality which they did not possess in themselves. But Abelard was neither St. Augustine nor St. Anselm, but only Peter Abelard. He did not choose to be a Christian doctor, so he became something very like a heretic ; and so he might have died, had not St. Bernard arisen to save him from becoming an heresiarch.

The first condemnation of Abelard at Soissons did not proceed from St. Bernard. It seems to have come from the teachers of the old school, whose influence he

<sup>1</sup> Cum in his quæ nostris corporalibus objaacent sensibus, vel quod nos ipsi in interiore homine sumus, scientia comprehendendis laboremus nec sufficiamus, nec tamen impudenter in illa quæ supra sunt divina et ineffabilia pietas fidelis ardescit. De Trin. 5. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Puto quia ea ipsa ex magna parte, si vel medioeris ingenii est potest ipse sibi saltem sola ratione persuadere.—Monolog. 1. Ratione ejus (Roscellini) error demonstrandus est. De Fide in Trin. 3.

had destroyed.<sup>1</sup> His accusers were no match for him in learning, and he convicted them of ignorance and mistakes in theology; and in the end, he seems to have been condemned in an arbitrary way. St. Bernard does not seem at first to have been unfavourably disposed to Abelard; he visited the monastery of the Paraclete, of which Heloise was Abbess, and which was under Abelard's direction, and the nuns were rejoiced to see him. He does not appear to have read his works until they were sent to him by his friend William of St. Thierry.<sup>2</sup> "Of these things," he says

<sup>1</sup> There seems no reason to doubt Abelard's own graphic account of the council of Soissons, in his *Historia Calamitatum*. Berengarius's attack upon the Bishops who were present cannot be trusted in detail, from its manifest exaggeration, but its tone is that of a man attacking the love of ease of a high and dry school in authority. Berengarius's work is curious, as a specimen of a middle-age pamphlet. It is a flippant and profane attack on St. Bernard, which its author was obliged to defend in his maturer years by treating as a joke. *Si quid in personam hominis Dei dixi, joco legatur non serio*. In the same place, he excuses himself by saying that Aristotle attacked Socrates, and St. Jerome attacked St. Augustine. *Ep. 18, inter ep. Abael. vol. i.*

<sup>2</sup> It seems as if St. Bernard's attack on Abelard had been placed rather too early. It is true that Abelard points him out as his opponent before he became Abbot of St. Gildas, but from St. Bernard's own letters it is evident that he took no active part against him until his return to France from Brittany. And certain it is, that the same Abelard, apparently before he established himself permanently a second time at the Paraclete, but certainly after his retirement to St. Gildas, writes to St. Bernard about the *Charitas qua me præcipue amplecteris*. *Abael. Op. p. vol. 1, p. 244*. Again, William of Thierry finds it necessary to exhort St. Bernard strongly not to allow affection to prevent his taking an active part against Abelard.

to William, "I have hardly heard anything." It was during Lent that the Abbot's book came to him, and he would not break off the quiet of the season by plunging into Abelard's Introduction to Theology. But when Lent was over, and he had thoroughly examined the question, the whole importance of the matter burst upon him. Abelard's doctrines had spread far and wide ; men from all parts of Europe flocked to his lectures ; his books had crossed the seas, and were read beyond the Alps. There was a dangerous Rationalism infecting the intellectual youth of the rising generation. It had even spread among the cardinals, and Abelard had a party in the sacred college itself. It was high time to oppose the evil ; and none was so able to do so as St. Bernard. None had such an instinctive perception of Christian doctrine, or was more capable of laying his finger precisely on the question at issue. It was not hard, therefore, for a mind like his to see the shallowness of Abelard's principles. Nothing is more certain than that opinion and faith are not the same thing ; it is a mere fact that the Saints are as sure of the reality of their faith as of an object perceived by the senses, while opinion, by its very nature, is not certainty. And this was a fact which Abelard overlooked ; whether rightly or wrongly, faith is entirely independent of reason. Intellect, indeed, has a certainty of its own in its own sphere, in matters which are absolutely true or absolutely false ; but no one would pretend that such is the case with the subjects treated of in Christian doctrine, for they are above intellect.<sup>1</sup> Abelard might,

<sup>1</sup> Quod intellexisti non est de eo quod ultra quæras, aut si est non intellexisti. De Cons. 5, 3.

indeed, have said that truth about the nature of God was unattainable on earth, but to say that it was attainable by reason alone was manifestly untrue.

This was the moral of all Cistercian teaching, and the history of their quarrel with the schools ; they taught men to seek certainty elsewhere. "The Spirit of God will lead you into all truth. What means all Truth?" said a voice heard one Advent in the cloister of Rievaulx. "It means that one truth which makes all things true. For in one sense, all things that are true ; for whatever is false, is not at all. But that truth into which the apostles were brought, was that in which all things are, and which is in all things, in which there is nothing false, nothing ambiguous, nothing deceptive ; and this Truth is seen by the heart, not by the flesh." And that this line of teaching was the right one to save the age from Rationalism, was proved by the event. Abelard's influence melted before St. Bernard. He challenged the Saint to dispute with him at the Council of Soissons. St. Bernard at first refused to dispute with one who had been trained to disputation from his youth ; besides it was a question of authority, not of disputation. At length, however, when he found that the truth was likely to suffer from his refusal, he consented, at the instance of his friends, with tears in his eyes, determined, according to our Lord's rule, not to think beforehand what he should say. When the day came, the town of Soissons was crowded with men from all parts of France. The king and the Bishops were there, and on the other hand the noisy and tumultuous men of the schools, the partisans of Abelard. All the world was there to witness the encounter between the two first men of the age, the representatives of opposite

principles. To the surprise of all, after St. Bernard had given an account of the opinion to be canvassed, Abelard, instead of replying, appealed to the Pope. Abelard had himself given the challenge, and was not a man wont to be intimidated. Besides, St. Bernard, who once stopped a persecution raised against the Jews, was not a likely man to allow any violence to be used against Abelard's person, either by king or populace. One account, however, says that he appealed to Rome, from dread of a popular tumult. Another account says, that when he attempted to speak, his memory failed him and he could not utter a word. Amidst these conflicting accounts, it is safest to judge by the result. Abelard started on his way to Rome to support the appeal which he had made ; it was by no means a desperate case, for he had, as has been noticed above, a party in the Sacred College. But by the time that he had got as far as Cluny, his heart had failed him ; there appears in many passages of his writings a hesitation, as though if he could but have reconciled Aristotle and the Church, he would have been orthodox ; his conscience was not at rest, and the sight of St. Bernard at the council had awakened it anew. His had been a long and weary life, made up of headstrong passions and signal misfortunes ; and his troubled spirit longed for rest. When therefore the Abbot of Citeaux came to Cluny, and offered to make his peace with St. Bernard, Abelard was prepared to make a confession of faith which was equivalent to a retractation of his errors ; and when the Pope's letter arrived condemning his opinions, it found him already prepared to submit. Abelard broken in health and spirit lived for three years in the peaceful cloister of Cluny, and died a sincere penitent in 1142.

Thus most effectually did Cistercian teaching fulfil its task. Abelard left no school behind him. His work in the schools had been simply one of destruction. His teaching had nothing positive ; and when once he had hidden himself in the cloister of Cluny, nothing more is heard of him.

It was easy therefore to confute Abelard so far ;<sup>1</sup> but St. Bernard had another task to perform. How were the sons of the Church to recover a healthy tone after being spoiled by this baneful teaching ?<sup>2</sup> For this purpose it was not enough to refute, or even to substitute truth for error, they must also learn to love the truth. And to effect this was the object of all Cistercian teaching. A moral discipline was required to heal the diseased will. With a philosophy, in reality far deeper than that of Abelard, though it did not profess to be philosophy at all St. Bernard made the acceptance of religious truth to depend upon the will. Faith he defined to be a willing and certain foretaste of a truth not yet made manifest. Truth is offered for acceptance, not to the intellect, but to the conscience. The Church does for us the office of the intellect ; it puts the faith for us into an intelligible form. And so the creed, the intellectual object, as it may be called, of our faith, comes to us from without. It is a certain,

<sup>1</sup> St. Bernard went straight to the point when he attacked Abelard as holding opinions contrary to reason, as well as to faith. *Quid enim, he says, magis contra rationem, quam ratione rationem conari transcendere.*

<sup>2</sup> The Abbé Ratisbonne, in his beautiful *Life of St. Bernard*, compares Abelard's doctrines to Kant's Antinomies of pure reason. 'This is paying Abelard's philosophical powers a great compliment. He is much more like Locke on the Reasonableness of Christianity.'



definite, and substantive thing, embodied in words by the Church, and coming to us in a clear, unbroken sound, for the Church speaks but one language. Just as words are to us the interpretation of what we feel, by giving us a classification for our sensations, so do the words of the Holy Church interpret for us what we know of God. But St. Bernard went deeper than this ; the real and heavenly object of our faith comes to us through the Sacraments, and so God Himself is the real cause of our knowledge of Him ; and it is love, by which we are united to Him, which fills up, as it were, the outline of the Church, and gives a meaning to our imperfect words beyond what they have of their own nature. Love, therefore, is the proper antidote to Rationalism ; and St. Bernard did much more towards healing the wounds of the Church, when he preached his Sermons on the Canticles, than when he refuted Abelard, in his letter to Pope Innocent. Why, indeed, should he seek by premiss and conclusion for Him whom he has found already by love ? “ To those who thus seek him, says St. Bernard,<sup>1</sup> the Lord cries out, *Noli me tangere*, Touch me not ; that is, Quit this erring sense ; lean on the Word, learn to go by faith : faith, which cannot err ; which seizes on what is invisible, feels not the need of sense, passes the bounds of human reason, the use of nature, the bonds of experience. Why ask the eye for what it cannot see ? Why stretch forth the hand to grope for what is above it ? Let faith pronounce of me what is not unworthy of my majesty. Learn to hold for certain, to follow in safety, what it teaches thee. Touch me not ; for I have not yet ascended to

<sup>1</sup> In Cant. 28.

my Father. As if when He has once ascended, He would either be willing to be loved, or we capable of touching him. Yea, but thou shalt be capable, by love, not by the touch ; by desire, not by the eye ; by faith, not by sense. Faith in the depth of its mystic bosom comprehends what is the length and breadth, and depth and height. Thou shalt touch Him with the hand of faith, the finger of desire, the embrace of devotion ; thou shalt touch Him with the eye of the heart. And will He then be black ?<sup>1</sup> Nay, the beloved is white and red. Beautiful exceedingly is He who is surrounded with the red flowers of the rose and the white lily of the valleys, that is, the choirs of martyrs and of virgins ; and who, sitting in the midst of them, is himself both a virgin and a martyr. Ten thousand times ten thousand are around Him, but needest thou fear lest thou shouldst mistake some other for Him, when thou seekest Him whom thou lovest ? Nay, thou wilt not hesitate whom to select out of them all. Easily wilt thou recognize Him out of the thousands more beautiful than all ; and thou wilt say, This is He that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the multitude of His strength."

Before such teaching as this, no wonder that Rationalism fled away ; cold and dead as it is, it cannot hold before warmth and life. But Cistercian teaching had a great influence on the Church after it. Its opposition to the scholastic method was most salutary ; it gave a breathing time to the Church, and prepared it to receive the teaching of the great schoolmen of the thirteenth century. The church was not yet ready for the schools, or rather the schools were not ready for the church ;

<sup>1</sup> Song of Solomon, i. 5.

men must learn to love the truth before they can safely philosophize upon it. St. Bernard and St. Aelred were not mere negative opponents of Rationalism ; there is a great deal of positive theology in their works, dressed in the commanding eloquence of St. Bernard and the sweet language of St. Aelred. No one can read the masterly refutation of the Errors of Gilbert de la Poree without wondering at the acuteness as well as the deep knowledge of theology possessed by St. Bernard, the more wonderful because Gilbert's errors belong rather to the Pantheism of the thirteenth than to the Rationalism of the twelfth century. The questions so beautifully treated of in the Sermons on the Canticles are precisely the same as those which appear in the Summa of St. Thomas, how the nature of God is very oneness, and there is nothing accidental in Him, how angels see all things in the Word, how the soul of man is naturally eternal, how grace differs from the substance of the soul. In St. Aelred the same thing is observable ; none can help being struck with his clear and orthodox language on the subject of the Incarnation, while he rejects what he calls scholastic subtleties. The influence of St. Anselm is very easily to be traced in his writings, so that in some parts of his Mirror of Charity he is much more of a schoolman than St. Bernard. Still it is true that the office of the Cistercians was to oppose the scholastic philosophy, which the age could not as yet bear. Citeaux purified the schools by keeping aloof from them ; it was reserved for another order to make an inroad into the schools themselves, and to purify them by establishing Christ's banner in the midst of them, and marking them with His cross. Thus God ever in his goodness provides for the wants of the Church. First came St. Anselm, the saintly philosopher, to stir

up the intellect of the Church ; and then St. Bernard and St. Aelred to check the pride of intellect, and then last of all the great Saint, who could safely doubt of all, for he knew beforehand how to solve all doubts at the foot of the crucifix, St. Thomas Aquinas.

L I V E S  
OF  
THE ENGLISH SAINTS.

---

**St. Ninian,**  
BISHOP OF CANDIDA CASA.

MANSUETI HEREDITABUNT TERRAM, ET DELECTABUNTUR IN  
MULTITUDINE PACIS.

LONDON :  
JAMES TOOVEY, 192, PICCADILLY.

---

1845.



## CONTENTS.

Chap.		Page
	ADVERTISEMENT . . . . .	v
1.	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
2.	ST. NINIAN'S EARLY DAYS . . . . .	11
3.	ST. NINIAN'S RIPER YEARS . . . . .	24
4.	ST. NINIAN'S JOURNEY TO ROME . . . . .	41
5.	ST. NINIAN'S LIFE AT ROME . . . . .	56
6.	ST. NINIAN'S RETURN TO BRITAIN . . . . .	75
7.	ST. NINIAN IN GALLOWAY . . . . .	85
8.	CONVERSION OF THE PICTS . . . . .	119
9.	ST. NINIAN'S LATTER DAYS . . . . .	130
10.	CONCLUSION . . . . .	140





## ADVERTISEMENT.

OUR knowledge of St. Ninian is chiefly owing to the Life of him by St. Aelred, which has been principally followed in these pages. Its genuineness was, indeed, questioned by the Bollandists, but apparently without any reason. It has been uniformly referred to as St. Aelred's by a long chain of English writers, nor is there any other known as such. The copy in the Bodleian Library is part of a M.S. (Laud 668) containing works undoubtedly his, which was written within twenty years after his death; and one in the British Museum (M.S.S. Cotton. Tib. D. 3.), of the close of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century, distinctly attributes the authorship to him. The chief reason assigned by the Bollandists for doubting its genuineness is, that the opening words of their copy, which they do not quote, are not the same as those given by Pitseus as St. Aelred's. His words are " Multo-

rum bonorum virorum.” Those at the beginning of the Prologus in our M.S.S. are “Multis virorum sapientium.” The difference is so slight that it would seem most probable, and from other considerations it is almost certain, that the person who made the copy for the Bollandists, overlooked, as he might easily do, the Prologus, and began with the Life, of which the first words are, “Gloriosissimam beati Niniani;” since in other respects their M.S. appears to have been the same as ours.

The Service for St. Ninian’s Day, from the Aberdeen Breviary, was not seen until this Life had nearly passed through the press. The historical references coincide almost entirely with what had been written, being derived for the most part from St. Aelred’s Life. The only points which call for notice are, that the words “patriæ pater genuit patronum,” which occur in a Responsary, look as if the Saint was considered to be a native of Galloway; and that the “brother,” mentioned as the companion of his journeying, is called “collega,” as if he had been a brother of his monastery, not a relation.

LIFE OF

**St. Ninian,**

BISHOP OF CANDIDA CASA, AND

APOSTLE OF THE SOUTHERN PICTS,

CIRC. A. D. 360-432.

---

CHAPTER I.

*Introduction.*

How many of us have never heard of St. Ninian ! How many, on hearing of him, would carelessly put aside the thought of his history, as a matter of no concern, as a tale of former days, of what once was, and is no longer, in any way which connects him with us, or us with him. But this is a thoughtless way of viewing any subject. All things may be connected one with another ; the works of former times may have exercised an influence which still lives. Still more is this the case with Saints. The world passes away, and the works of the world, and men, so far as they are of the world, and unite themselves with the world, pass with it ; but they who are gifted with divine life, and united to Christ, abide for ever ; now more truly living than when the world saw them.

If there be one whom the Church has recognized as a Saint, there is a work of Divine Grace at which

we should pause, and turn aside, and view with reverend awe ; there is a child of Adam renewed in the Divine image ; one in whom a work has been wrought, which is begun in many and perfected in few. His history, could we see it as it is—his inward history—how eventful would it be ; how many a crisis would it involve ! What motions of Divine grace—what watchful Providences—what a correspondence on his own part to the calls of Heaven ! What a precious tale of deeds and sufferings, of watchfulness and self-restraint, of prayers and heavenly aspirations ! How intense is the interest excited by examining some work of human skill, and tracing its beauty, or contrivance, or finished art ! How full are the natural works of God of all that is calculated to engage our attention, to awaken surprise, delight, and admiration. With how much more of deep feeling then should we view the spiritual creation, and trace out there the workings of providence and the effects of grace. Beautiful as is the natural world, the fair budding of spring, and the grass and trees, and the clear shining after rain, they are but faint images indeed of holy men, and of their varied graces, whose sweetness Scripture shadows out by the choicest objects of sense. And as we gratefully commemorate the glory and goodness of God, as shown in these passing works, still more should the manifold and abiding graces of His Elect call forth our thankfulness and praise.

But, it may be said, little is known of St. Ninian. It is true. Yet this might almost enhance our interest in him, and our wish to know that little. How many are there in every rank of life who pass from this world unrecognized, save by a few, yet high in the

Divine favour and of great attainments in sanctity. That Saints should be distinguished in any marked way, seems to be owing to (what we may call) the accident of their being brought by circumstances into positions which have elicited their hidden graces, and manifested them to the world. But as their holiness is independent of its visible effects, so those effects are no measure of it. By the world, men are estimated for their influence on its fortunes ; and in proportion as they have influenced it, is the degree of honour assigned them. But sanctity is independent of such outward manifestations or visible fruits. Though, in St. Ninian's case, if we believe those who in olden time so greatly venerated this holy man, there were not wanting abundant sensible tokens of his power and prevailing intercession. Even Protestant writers<sup>1</sup> allow that he had the gift of miracles, and the numerous worshippers at his shrine, three or four hundred years ago, believed, and would allege facts in proof, that they received blessings, even miraculous ones, through his prayers availing with God.

Among ourselves, there has been a long suspension of that everlasting remembrance in which the righteous ought to be held, that affectionate interest with which we ought to cherish those who in their day have laboured for the Church, and been marked by special gifts of grace. But it is not many centuries since the name of St. Ninian was one of the most honoured in the Calendar, and people flocked from every part of the island to visit his shrine. His memory, has, indeed, had singular reverses. From the fifth to the twelfth century, it was scarcely known beyond the

<sup>1</sup> The Madgeburg Centuriators, tom. 4, 1429.

limits of the wild district where he had laboured and died. The only records of him were in the memory of his people, or written in a barbarous and unknown language. The succession of his See was interrupted. Successive tribes of uncivilized Celts occupied his country, and seemed to have obliterated almost every vestige of his earthly labours. But seven centuries passed, and his memory rose from its obscurity ; his power was recognized, his shrine was frequented, and his intercessions sought. Amid the wild wars of Scotland and the Border, a safe conduct was provided for pilgrims who were visiting his Church, and kings sought his prayers. Their piety was mixed, doubtless, according to the character of individuals, with even the grossest superstition ; still it implied a general recognition of his sanctity ; and the reason they would themselves have given of this devotion was, that they had experienced blessings through it ; and that such was, in some instances, at least, the case, is the most natural and obvious account of the matter.

That little should have been known of his history need not surprise us. He lived in a dark period of British history, and laboured among a rude people. In the centuries following his death, Galloway was the scene of frequent wars, and changed its masters and its inhabitants. The Southern Picts whom he had converted were in time merged among the other races who inhabited the east of Scotland, and it was, as to the world's history, as if he had never lived. But this is not different from what we might expect. Of how many other distinguished Saints have few traces been left in history ! Of how many of the holy Apostles is it merely recorded that they preached the gospel in certain remote districts, and were mar-

tyred ! Of the fruits of their preaching, of the Churches they founded, no certain vestiges remain. Yet their names are written in heaven ; their works are recorded there ; and the souls who, through their means, though of distant ages and of barbarous languages, were brought into that Communion, where all learn one language, and are formed after one model, and are brethren and fellow-countrymen in Christ, are blessing and praising God for the mercy he showed in their conversion. It may be to the increase of their blessedness to be thus humbled ; to have their works hidden from the world ; that having no reward of human praise here, they may enjoy a more ample recompense in heaven.

Do not think slightly then of St. Ninian because he is little known ; but rather let us trace out with reverential love what may be learnt of him. We know more of him, and on better authority, than we do of many more exalted Saints ; and if in searching out what may be known of him, we seem to be led into dry and antiquarian matter, let it not be an ungrateful labour. It may be repaid by the contemplation of his graces.

And there are circumstances which give a peculiar interest to St. Ninian. Besides his being one of our own Saints, and the earliest Missionary, and first Bishop in Scotland of whom we have any authentic record ; he lived at a time when there was a change taking place in the mode in which conversions to the faith were made. The barbarous nations were now pouring in upon the Christians, and threatening the destruction of the empire of the Church, as though it were not Christ's. St. Ninian was one of the first of those who turned back the arms of the invaders, and reduced them by meekness and truth, under the gentle and happy sway

of the gospel. Again, conversions had hitherto been of individuals, now they became national ; that of the Picts was one of the first. And the system on which missions were conducted in the countries of Europe, found one of their earliest types in him.

It may, indeed, very naturally be asked, what do we really know of this ancient Saint, and, considering his age, country, and circumstances, what authentic records can there be of the events of his life ?

Of the history of Britain at that time, (the close of the fourth and early part of the fifth century) the notices, whether civil or ecclesiastical, are very few, scanty, and unsatisfactory. It was St. Ninian's lot to live at that critical period, when the Roman power was breaking, and the empire was giving way under internal divisions, and the inroads of the Northern tribes. And Britain, which had been raised from a wild and savage condition to considerable civilization, was again to be thrown back into a more miserable barbarism by the inundations of the Caledonians, and the occupation of the Saxons. They were too much engaged in fighting to write narratives of what they did ; and any memorials they had were lost in the troubles which followed. Of its ecclesiastical history we are still more ignorant. The age of St. Ninian may be looked on as one of which almost nothing is recorded in the annals of the British Church ; so that we must form our ideas of this particular period by what we know of the times preceding and following it. It would come in to fill the blank between the third and fourth chapters of the account of the British Church, which is prefixed to the life of St. Augustine.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No. iii. of this Series.



Of one then who lived in such an age, what records can we have? May not the history be given up as entirely uncertain? I conceive not; and for these reasons. Personal history is preserved when public events are unrecorded and forgotten. Nay, in all history it is often through the narratives of the lives of individuals alone, that many circumstances of public importance have been preserved to us; it is round the individual that interest centres, and his doings which are remembered. We know how children are impressed by the words and deeds of individual worthies, when of the general course of the history they have no clear ideas, so that the best histories for them consist of a series of personal tales. And it is so with men generally, and particularly in a simple state of society. Among Christians this is still more the case; since with them the affectionate remembrance of those who are gone, is heightened by religious reverence, and sanctioned and sustained by the commemoration of the departed. It is to the individual Saint that Christians look, rather than to the events of general history; for they view him as the work of Divine grace; whilst the course of the world, though in its progress and issue, the effect of His providence, is in detail but the manifestation of man's wilfulness and misery.

We cannot suppose but that the Picts, among whom St. Ninian had introduced the Gospel, would retain the memory of one to whom they were indebted for all they held dear. And in Galloway he had left a standing memorial in the church of stone, which was looked on with no little interest by the admiring Britons, and was thought to give a name to the place where it stood. He left a monastery too, and that

would be the means of preserving some records of him. That such records were preserved we know, on the authority of the earliest witnesses we could have—the most learned and accomplished scholars, and the most holy men of their age—Bede and Alcuin.

In Bede's time the Southern Piets were still existing as a separate race, and testified to having derived their Christianity from St. Ninian ; and Whithern, with his church and tomb, was a visible memorial. A Saxon succession of Bishops and a Saxon monastery had been established here, on the conquest of Galloway by that people. So that in Bede we have the testimony of one who had full means of informing himself on the subject, as to the main incidents of St. Ninian's life ; as also had Alcuin, of whom there is a letter still extant, written to the Brethren of the Saxon Monastery of Whithern, recognizing the miracles and holiness of the Saint. And after this we find incidental mention of St. Ninian in different writers, all treating the chief facts of his life as matter of authentic history.

These are however only portions of information incidentally given, indications of a larger store existing among the people whom he had converted, and where his Church and monastery were. Among them we might expect that records would exist, (as among the other Celtic tribes in Wales and Ireland,) written in their own language, and from that very circumstance little known to the rest of the world. Galloway had been over-run by different tribes, but (with the exception of the brief occupation by the Saxons) they were all of the Celtic race, and their languages, though different dialects, were mutually intelligible. And we know that in the twelfth century lives of the Saint were extant in their language.

This we learn from the testimony of St. Aelred of Rievaulx, who was requested by the brethren of the convent of Whithern to compose a life of their Patron Saint in Latin. In an Introduction addressed to them, he speaks of the disadvantage arising from the life of the Saint only existing in a barbarous language, (or being written in a barbarous style) which obscured his history, and interfered with the pleasure and edification of the readers. It seems to be implied that more than one life was extant in Celtic, and perhaps in Latin, but that very rude and barbarous, and that St. Aelred selected as the groundwork of his life the one which seemed to him the most authentic. And it is possible that a life referred to by Archbishop Usher, as existing among the Irish, may be the representative of some of the others.

We regard this life then, as representing what St. Aelred considered the most authentic account then existing of St. Ninian, an account not improbably, in tradition at least, almost contemporaneous with the Saint, and supplying the information which Bede and Aleuin possessed respecting him.

Of the authority of St. Aelred as a biographer, little need be said. He, whom even Bale calls a second St. Bernard, was endued with that kindred sanctity which fitted him to be the biographer of a Saint ; and his education in the Scottish court and long friendship with the king, and in particular his connexion with Fergus, the lord of Galloway, and his labours for the restoration of religion in that country, as it led him to tread in the footsteps of St. Ninian, would enable him to ascertain all that could be learnt of authority respecting him.

The work was written towards the close of his own life, between 1153 and 1166. It agrees in style with

his other works, and is every way worthy of him. ~Being intended for spiritual reading and edification, it contains much that is inserted for that end, and throws the sentiments which might be supposed to influence the Saint into the dramatic form of a soliloquy or speech. Perhaps in one or two points it is liable to the charge of anachronism, from the writer's imagining the existence of the customs of his own time, in the days of which he is writing. It is a singular gift in a writer to be able to strip himself of the habits of thought to which he has ever been familiarized, or even constantly to keep in mind that practices existing in his own day are of recent origin. It ought to be added, that St. Aelred's Life bears internal marks of truth, from its correspondence with other history in minute points of chronology, with the circumstances and habits of the age, and with the distinctions of the tribes who occupied the country, as the researches of the latest writers have determined them. Indeed from St. Aelred to the present century, almost all who have written about St. Ninian have fallen into some error or other from which he seems to be free. This life soon became a popular work in our monasteries, if we may argue from the numerous copies which seem to have been made.

It was abridged by John of Tinmouth, and from him was inserted by Capgrave in his collection. It has received the highest sanction from the Scottish Church, as selections from it were read as Lessons for St. Ninian's day, in the Aberdeen Breviary. There are copies made within a few years after St. Aelred's death, in the Bodleian and the British Museum; and it has been printed, though without the Intro-

duction, by Pinkerton, in a collection of old Lives of Scottish Saints.

Later writers mention further circumstances respecting St. Ninian, but we have little evidence of their truth. They may in some cases be regarded as traditional stories, and have credit given to them as not being intrinsically improbable, in others the silence of St. Aelred respecting them may be taken as a fair proof that he did not know, or did not believe them. The Irish life referred to by Archbishop Usher does not appear entitled to much consideration.

---

## CHAPTER II.

### *St. Ninian's early Days.*

THE date of St. Ninian's birth must be placed about the middle of the fourth century. Alford has given 360. We may rather conceive it to have been a few years earlier, as in 357, so as to make him forty years of age at his consecration as a Bishop, in 397.

His name has been variously written and pronounced. We now uniformly call him Ninian, as he has usually been called in England, and so his name is given in the Roman Martyrology and by St. Aelred. In Bede, however, the name is Nynias, in William of Malmesbury Ninas, in other writers Ninus. In Scotland he is popularly called Ringan, the word being pronounced Rin'nán, or Rinnian, or, (as in the Shetland Isles) Ronyan. In Ireland, both Ringan and Ninian. How the difference in the first letter arose (for the

rest is much the same in pronunciation) we have no means of conjecturing.

The father of the Saint, as his biographer explicitly states, was a British Prince. To appreciate however the condition of such a person in the age of St. Ninian, we must forget the associations which we usually connect with the Ancient Britons. This was no longer a country occupied by wild savages, with half naked and painted bodies, who lived in assemblages of miserable huts, buried in woods and protected by morasses. This state of things might exist in those parts of the Island which were unsubdued or unoccupied by the Romans ; but those in which they had now for three centuries been predominant, had, like their other provinces, become assimilated to the habits of the conquerors.

Under this transforming system, a complete change had been made in the appearance of the country and the habits of the people. Forests had been cleared, marshes drained, bridges thrown over the rivers, and roads formed, intersecting the whole island, and affording speedy and secure communication. Towns sprung up, which imitated the cities of the continent. They had their temples, basilicas, and theatres adorned with painting and sculpture ; their shows and exhibitions. So that in a period of three hundred years, Britain advanced in wealth and prosperity, and her artisans rivalled in activity and skill those of the continent ; "every production of art and nature, every object of convenience or luxury, was accumulated in this rich and fruitful province." The remains which are still left among us, bespeak the advance of luxury and civilization. The tessellated pavement, the marble bath, the elegant vase, tell what

Roman taste had produced in England ; while we still use, after a lapse of sixteen hundred years, the roads which her labour formed.

With these changes there rose up a corresponding alteration in the native population. They became Romans ; filled the ranks of the legions ; acquired the rights of citizens, and naturally imitated, as the model of refinement and civilization, the dress, language, and manners of the Italian. The British language still continued as the mother tongue of the great body of the people, but even that was in a measure Latinized, and among the higher classes, Latin was generally spoken. The pleadings of the courts were conducted in it, and the British youth were taught to speak it by their grammarians and rhetoricians, whose instructions formed the chief part of Roman education. Even in the days of Agricola Latin was cultivated, and the natives excelled in eloquence ; the sons of the British chieftains received a Roman education, and began to adopt the Roman dress ; and in the fourth century, these beginnings had issued in the complete assimilation of the Provincial to the Roman habits ; and the son of a British prince may be conceived not to have differed much, in point of manners and civilization, from the inhabitants of any other part of the empire.

Alford, indeed, smiles at the flattery of his biographer, in exalting the Saint to the worldly distinction of the son of a king. St. Aelred, however, or his Galwegian authority, was quite aware of the meaning of this title when applied to a British chief. He says, in speaking of Tudual, a petty prince in Galloway, "That the whole island was divided into portions subject to different kings." Like the other Celtic nations,

the Britons consisted of distinct tribes, with various subdivisions of septs and clans, each under its own chieftain, and these subordinated to a superior one. Thus the four Kings whom Cæsar speaks of in the one kingdom of Kent. These national subordinations, living on under, and through, the Roman period, and naturally prevailing most on the outskirts of the empire, are supposed to have been the origin of the clans of the Scottish border. St. Aelred would identify the position of the father of our Saint, with the kings who governed the whole of the Cumbrian Britons till within the memory of his own time; though this is giving him a wider extent of authority than he probably possessed.

To suppose St. Ninian the son of one of the minor chieftains under the Roman sway, is not assigning him a very high or improbable distinction. These kings, indeed, from their lands, or the contributions of their tribes, often acquired considerable wealth, and this coincides with what is said by his biographer of the sacrifice he made in relinquishing his father's house and his prospects in Britain, as well as with all we hear of his education, and his acquaintance with the full extent of theological teaching, which his own country could supply.

St. Ninian's father then was a petty chieftain of a British tribe, and, as we should infer from St. Aelred's description, on the north-west coast of Cumberland. It is true that the claim of Cumberland to this her one only native Saint may be disputed, and the right we have to introduce St. Ninian into a series of English Saints. For two other parts of the island have been generally assigned. On the one hand, though without any alleged ground so far as we can ascertain, North Wales is stated



to have been his birth-place by Leland, Bale, and others ; while he has most commonly been regarded as a native of Scotland, and it has not unnaturally been supposed that he was born near Whithern, the seat of his future Bishopric ; not unnaturally, because it was to labour for the restoration of religion among his own countrymen, primarily, that he was sent from Rome. The inhabitants of Galloway, however, were of one and the same race with the Britons of Cumberland, and so were really his countrymen, even if he were born in Cumberland ; and as we go on it will appear that his mission at first was not directed to Whithern, but that after landing and preaching in his native country, he chose that as his permanent abode. St. Aelred is certainly an unprejudiced witness. His authority was a Galwegian life, and he was writing his narrative for the Church of Galloway, and he had strong affections for that country. Still he states, as the received opinion of his day, that the coast of Cumberland by the Solway was the birth-place of the Saint. His words are, "in that district, as it is thought, which lying in the western parts of the island, (where the sea, stretching out, as it were, an arm, and forming two angles on each side, separates what are now the kingdoms of the Scotch and English) is proved, not only by the authority of histories, but also by the memory of some persons, to have had kings of its own, even to the latest times of the Saxons."<sup>1</sup> This arm of the sea

<sup>1</sup> "In ea, ut putatur, regione, quæ in occiduis ipsius insulæ partibus (ubi Oceanus quasi brachium porrigens, et ex utraque parte duos angulos faciens, Scotorum nunc et Anglorum regna dividit) constituta, usque ad novissima Anglorum tempora proprium habuisse regem, non solum historiarum fide, sed quorundam quoque memoriâ comprobatur."

is evidently the Solway, which on the cession of Cumberland to Henry II., 1153, became the boundary of the two kingdoms ; and it was on the western shore of the Island, and in a district which had kings of its own, "*usque ad novissima Anglorum tempora ;*" that is, till the end of the Saxon times. The Cumbrian Britons had kings of their own till the year 946, when the last of their princes, Dunmail, fell in defence of their narrow territories, and Edmund gave the conquered country to the Scottish kings. The British inhabitants continued as a separate race in the time of St. Aelred, and took a conspicuous part in the Battle of the Standard.

It is quite clear that Galloway was not the country intended, for it had Lords of its own, who were in power in Aelred's day, and some time after ; and as he was on terms of intimate friendship with Fergus, the then lord, he would certainly not speak of them as matter either of history or tradition.

Pinkerton indeed in a note on St. Aelred's life, supposes as others had done, that Strathelydd, the Scottish portion of the great northern settlement of Britons, is the district referred to. But there are these objections to the view. Strathelydd which lies on the opposite side of the Solway, and stretches to the Clyde, would scarcely have been described as in the western parts, in connexion with the mention of that sea, as it is its south-eastern coast only which abuts upon the Solway. Again, though the Strathelydd race of kings had continued till 975, or perhaps 1018, when there is the last mention of the inhabitants of Strathelydd as having a king ; yet it does not appear why they should be mentioned in connexion with the Angli—the Saxons—who had not occupied

that district for some centuries previously, and then only for a short time and very partially. Indeed the "*usque ad novissima Anglorum tempora*" would not seem to have any meaning as regarded any part of Scotland, where, in St. Aelred's days, the Angli still continued in as much power as at any previous time.<sup>1</sup>

And there is a remarkable confirmation of our view in Leland's account; for though he represents North Wales as Ninian's birth-place, and throughout his history differs materially from St. Aelred, yet he says that the country the Saint first visited as a missionary, was the coast of Cumberland, "between St. Bees Head and Carlisle," and Galloway. This is what we conceive him to have done, supposing that part of Cumberland to have been his birth-place, and so far it coincides with St. Aelred's account, that he first went to his native place; except that Leland, quite erroneously it would seem, places that missionary visit before, instead of after, his residence at Rome.

It is allowed that St. Aelred's description is obscure, but to suppose it to describe the Cumbrian coast, seems the most natural interpretation. Let us then assume that St. Ninian is an English and a Cumbrian Saint. In that case he would be one of the great tribe of Brigantes, who occupied the whole of the Northern counties of England. The district where he was born was

<sup>1</sup> The name Cumbria was given to the whole district occupied by the Cwmry, in Scotland and the north of England, sometimes including even Galloway. The Scottish part was called Strathclydd; the English, to which the name of Cumberland was afterwards appropriated, Reged. We must not, therefore, claim the authority of writers who call St. Ninian a native of Cumbria, as they may have meant, of the Scottish portion.

in those days one of considerable importance. It lay close to the wall of Severus, which there came to its western limit, and for the defence of this line, a very large proportion of the Roman forces was stationed in the neighbourhood ; and it was near the point where the great line of road through York to Carlisle terminated. These circumstances made the district a busy and excited one, and gave many opportunities of intercourse with the Romans, and the rest of the world. Still it was the busy scene of camps and warfare, for the country was intersected by roads, and filled by garrisons ; and its position on the Scottish border must even then have made it a restless and unsettled dwelling-place.

In a religious point of view, it is possible that this free intercourse may have brought a knowledge of the Gospel earlier amongst the natives of this district, than of others which were in actual distance less remote. We know so little of the religious history of Britain at this time, that we must judge much by probabilities, and the parallels of other countries. There had long been a Bishop at York, and probably the small size of the island would have promoted a more general conversion of the people than in France, where, at the same period, a large portion of the country were still unconverted. In the towns, Christian Churches would be established ; but in country districts, the people might still be to a great extent pagan. Indeed, it was to complete the conversion of the inhabitants of the western side of the island, as well as to root out the errors which prevailed among those who were Christians, that St. Ninian was many years after sent back from Rome. That the father of St. Ninian was a Christian, is mentioned as a distinction.

We might probably infer, from the prince of the district having accepted the gospel, that it would be promoted among his countrymen, that Churches were built, and clergy fixed among them. St. Ninian's reverence for Churches is mentioned by his biographer, as a mark of his youthful piety. Now, not far from the sea-coast, in the very part of Cumberland where we conceive St. Ninian to have been born, and of which his father was the chieftain, there is a church, the architecture of which has been supposed to indicate its being built during the Roman occupation of Britain—that of Newton Arloch, in the parish of Holme Cultram. It is, then, not an improbable conjecture, that this church, which, unlike the rest of the British churches, was built of stone, may have been connected with the family of our Saint. Shall we imagine its erection the work of the British prince, and his son baptized, and praying there? Or the fruit of the return of the Saint from Rome, when, as his Cathedral at Whithern was built of stone, a corresponding work of piety was performed, in the rebuilding the Church of his native district. Anyhow, if such, as is by no means improbable, be the age of the Church, and this the birthplace of St. Ninian, we cannot but connect them with each other.

The very circumstance that Christians were living surrounded by a heathen population, assisted them to realize that they were a distinct people, enjoying peculiar privileges, and under especial obligations, separated from the world, as in profession, so in duties and in destinies. It was a state which gave a vivid force to the language of the New Testament, and a manifest visibility to the Church; and their faith may well be supposed to have been united to personal earnestness

and conviction, to actual renunciation of the world, and a life corresponding to their calling. Such the father of Ninian is said to have been ; “one of such faith and merit, as to be thought worthy of a son through whom the deficiencies in the faith of his own people might be supplied, and a distinct tribe (the Southern Picts) brought to a participation in the mysteries of our Holy religion.”

His mother has been supposed to be one of a family of Saints. The notion is not unnatural. In those days, when the few names we know are those of Saints, we should wish to imagine that they, at least, knew, and were connected with, each other. And the instances in sacred history, the selection of families for privileges, the rewarding the children for the piety of their parents, and the obvious effects of association, common education, and mutual intercession, would lead us to think it likely. All this would suggest the notion, till it passed into a probability, and guesses became reports, and their very likelihood made men believe them. Thus one would account for the tradition, that the mothers of St. Ninian and St. Patrick, whose name is said to have been Conch, or Conchessa, were sisters of St. Martin of Tours ; thus uniting, by the ties of blood, these holy men. This statement, as regards the mother of St. Ninian, is found in a MS. Catalogue of Saints, at Louvain, and in Hector Boethius, and other later writers, of little authority. But to say nothing of the improbability that the daughters of a Roman officer, in Pannonia or Italy, should have married two Britons, the life of St. Aelred would be decisive against it. It is not to be supposed that he should not have known it, had it in his day been matter of probable tradition. Yet he

not only omits it, but implies that St. Ninian's knowledge of St. Martin arose from the Life of the Saint, by Sulpicius.

A brother is mentioned by St. Aelred, in the later part of St. Ninian's life, as his companion in his episcopal travels in Galloway. His name was Plebeius ; and he is spoken of as his equal in sanctity. He, probably, was one who stayed in his father's house, and on the return of Ninian from Rome, became his fellow-labourer in the conversion of their countrymen, and his helper, by example and admonition, in personal holiness.

Born of such parents, our Saint "was in infancy regenerated in the sacred waters of Baptism." So his biographer begins his history—with the first element of spiritual life, the source of all his graces ; and very beautifully does he describe the preservation of the purity then imparted. We might, indeed, wish to know the circumstances by which the youthful Saint was surrounded ; the events which befel him, and the temptations he surmounted ; but it seems as if we were to view him as Angels might love to do, in his true spiritual condition, looking only to the Divine work in him, not to those temporary and earthly accidents by which it was carried out ; for of them no record is left us. It is this inward life only which St. Aelred records, and the graces in which it developed itself. We must imagine the outward circumstances of his condition as best we may.

"The wedding garment," he says, "which he then put on," that pure bright clothing of the soul by the gifts of grace, which the white robes of the new-baptized figured, "he preserved unsullied." Such was his special blessedness ; as one of those virgin souls which

follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. "Victorious over his faults"—those tendencies to evil which remain in the soul, like the Canaanites in Israel, to exercise the Christian warrior in watchfulness and obedience—"he presented it, spotless as it was, in the presence of Christ. And coming thus pure for the gift of Confirmation, he deserved, by the sanctity of his character, to have, as the enlightener of his holy heart, that Holy Spirit whom at first he had received to purify it."

"Under this Divine Guide, whilst still a child, yet with no childish mind, he shrunk from everything contrary to religion, from all that was opposed to chastity, to right conduct, or the laws of truth ; and ceased not to cultivate with the understanding of a man all that was of the law, of grace, of good report, whatever was of service to his neighbour and acceptable to God."

The circumstances of this holy childhood we must imagine—the examples of religious parents, the blessedness of a house where no sentiment unfavourable to piety was ever heard, the training of a saintly mother, his first lisping prayers, his reverend introduction to the Church. His first lessons in sacred reading, his little playmates, his youthful trials, his first schooling ; of these we only know that their influence issued in his sanctification and growth in grace. One means of this, St. Aelred specially intimates—the study of Holy Scripture, that meditative study which is the only way to let its truths take a deep and sure root in the heart.

"Blessed," his Life proceeds, "was he whose delight was in the Law of the Lord ; in His Law did he meditate day and night. He was like a tree planted



by the water side, which brought forth his fruit in due season."

This fruit was abundantly produced in the after-life of St. Ninian. Let us observe the preparation for it ; the early practice of meditating on Holy Scripture, by withdrawing the thoughts from dissipating objects, and calmly and silently turning them to God ; dwelling upon His word, and extracting from it all its sweetness. This is that studying, exercising one's self in, meditating, thinking on it, which we hear so much of in the Psalms. It is very important to accustom children to this practice, that they may not merely read over certain portions of Scripture, but, taking a few verses, dwell on them in silence, endeavouring to enter into their meaning, to realize what they contain, and apply it to themselves. "To read little and think much," is a rule of Bishop Taylor's.

But in subordination to this sacred reading and meditation, we cannot doubt that Ninian had all those advantages of secular learning which Britain afforded ; and these were not inconsiderable. At the neighbouring town of Lugubalia, our Carlisle, he would have the means of acquiring the preparatory learning of the encyclical course,<sup>1</sup> as no doubt the military establishments in the neighbourhood would induce even a higher class of teachers than ordinary to resort thither.

At York, which was in turns with London the seat of government, still greater opportunities would be afforded for completing his secular studies ; and the zeal and earnestness with which he would avail himself of them, his after history will abundantly testify.

<sup>1</sup> See Life of St. German, No. IX. of this series, pp. 14, 15.

Of his character in this part of his life St. Aelred writes, describing it as the fruit which in its season was brought forth from his continual meditation on the divine law, and the purifying and enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit. "He brought forth his fruit in due season," he says, "fulfilling in riper years what he had with the utmost devotion learnt in youth. His devout reverence for Churches was wonderful; wonderful his affection for his companions. He was temperate in food, sparing in words, assiduous in reading. His manners were engaging, he abstained from jesting, and ever subjected the flesh to the spirit."

---

### CHAPTER III.

#### *St. Ninian's Riper Years.*

PROCEEDING (we may well suppose) from this spiritual mind, and the fruit of it, was that mental energy and resolution which soon distinguished him. Indeed it could not fail to be so. It is matter of common observation, how remarkably the understanding of a poor and uneducated man is developed by religious earnestness. Such a one is awakened from sluggish indifference. The end of his being is set before him, and he feels that he has duties to discharge. The value of Christian knowledge begins to be appreciated, meditation on divine truths expands the faculties, and leads him to see the connexion of religious ideas; and love of the Object of Whom something is known, creates a holy eagerness to know more.

The young and noble Briton, with few advantages

indeed, yet earnestly desirous to use those few, had more given. He began in careful self-government, unfeigned reverence for Holy things, in sweetness of temper and purity of heart. The Holy Spirit whose first fruits were love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self control, imparted in due season and fuller measure his sevenfold gifts. Such is the true course of attaining divine wisdom. Holy Scripture, in enumerating these gifts, mentions first that which is the highest, and therefore the last attained ; in the actual order they are inverted, and become the steps of wisdom ; first is *fear*, the beginning of wisdom, fear of offending God and losing our souls ; then *reverence* for every manifestation of the Divine will and His truth ; hence *knowledge* imparted to the docile heart ; then *counsel* guiding us to choose our course each day aright ; then resoluteness and *strength* to adhere to it ; *understanding* readily to discern the Divine will and to enter into the meaning of His words ; and lastly, as the crowning point, *wisdom* in the contemplation and perception of the highest truth.

Far different in its origin is that unpractical temper which would treat the truths of our most Holy Faith as matters of mere intellectual knowledge, and seek to know what is and what may be said about them, in a curious and disputatious spirit, tampering with most sacred things. Such a temper can only end in darkness, ignorance, and error, even if it retains the outward expression of the truth ; for it is quite compatible with the neglect of relative duties, self-indulgence, angry passions, and gross habitual violations of the divine law. Nay, from its offensiveness to Almighty God, and profane familiarity in His most Holy Presence, and the hardening of a heart which has been

accustomed to close the affections and the will against the most influential truths, it is most likely to lead to falling away from grace and final departure from God.

But far different was the case of St. Ninian ; humility, purity, and love, were the elements of his character. In him holiness of heart was the principle which led to an earnest desire after divine knowledge. There was One Supreme Object of his affections, and on that same Object his thoughts would ever be fixed : where the heart is kept in the love of God, the mind will turn to the knowledge of Him. And it was the working of this simple principle which determined the course of his life. He had been taught the principles of the faith, and he sought to realize more and more what is revealed respecting the Heavenly Father, and the Eternal Son and the Holy Ghost. He was constant in drinking in at the fountain of Eternal Life in the Scriptures, and tracing there the manifestations of the truth ; and the result was a yearning after a more exact knowledge of Religious Truth, after that Truth which would be consistent with itself, and harmonize with the statements of Holy Writ.

“Before the mind,” it has been said, “has been roused to reflection and inquisitiveness about its own acts and impressions, it acquiesces, if religiously trained, in that practical devotion to the Blessed Trinity, and implicit acknowledgement of the Divinity of Son and Spirit, which Holy Scripture at once teaches and exemplifies.” “But as the intellect is cultivated and expanded, it cannot refrain from the attempt to analyze the vision which influences the heart, and the Object in which it centres. Nor does it stop here, till it has, in some sort, succeeded in expressing in words, what has all along been a principle both of the affections and of practical obedience.”

Such seems to have been the state of St. Ninian's mind ; and a most critical period it was in his spiritual history. For whereas the Divine arrangement is, to provide, by the gradual teaching of the Church, that knowledge which the religious mind desires, the circumstances of the British Church at that time failed to supply it. His heart would have responded to the notes of truth, but they were not truly and clearly heard.

It is not a pleasing task to depreciate the estimate which may have been formed of the religious condition of Britons at any period ; but a writer of St. Ninian's life cannot avoid the subject ; it stands full in his way, for the whole of our history turns upon the fact that the teaching of the British Church at that time was very imperfect and erroneous. His biographer is explicit on this point, and the evidence from other sources inclines the same way. Bede's statement as to the prevalence of Arianism, does not imply merely that when the British bishops consented to the suppression of the true doctrine at Ariminum, our church, like the rest of Christendom, wondered to find itself Arian. On the contrary, he speaks of a peculiar prevalence of error here ; an infection of Arianism first, and that followed by every form of heresy ; and the cause he assigns for it in the fickleness of the national character, would lead us to expect what he intimates, the inconsiderate reception of errors, and the want of any sound or stable teaching of the truth ; "*novi semper aliquid audire gaudenti, et nihil certi firmiter obtinenti.*"

Nor is it at all inconsistent with this, to believe that the Bishops adhered to the Nicene formulary, and that such was the profession of the British Church gene-

rally. In 353, they had unwillingly yielded at Ariminum, but in 363, St. Athanasius, in his letter to Jovian, enumerates them among a long list of nations who acknowledged the Creed of Nice. Persons might agree to the form in which the Catholic doctrine was expressed, and feel shocked at the idea of separating themselves from the faith and communion of the whole Church, and yet not have any deep hold on the truth itself, or, when they came to explain what they meant, any accurate knowledge of it. We may well imagine more active minds openly Arianizing ; more religious and less intellectual ones obscure and inconsistent in their statements, and quite unfit to teach dogmatically ; and this would coincide with the fact of the Bishops submitting under their trials to an Arianizing formula.

St. Jerome and St. Chrysostom have repeatedly, indeed, been referred to, as witnessing to the orthodoxy of the British Church, but the passages really bear very slightly on the subject, and rather suggest a different view ; for in each case the mention of Britain is introduced to establish the universal prevalence of the practice they are speaking of ; it existed even in Britain ; and Britons were regarded as very exiles from the rest of the world. "The Gospel has prevailed over heathenism," argues St. Chrysostom ;<sup>1</sup> "besides the Seythians, Moors, and Indians, even the British Isles have felt its power, and churches and altars are established there." "That it is not lawful to have a brother's wife, resounded even in Britain," besides other remote and barbarous countries. Again, in a passage more to the point, of which the beauty itself

<sup>1</sup> St. Chrys. tom. 10. 638, tom. 1. 575, tom. 3. 71, Ed. Ben. are the references made by Stillingfleet.

will be an excuse for quoting it at length, speaking of the study of the Holy Scriptures, he compares them to a "Paradise of Delight, not like that of Eden confined to one place, but filling the whole earth, and extending to the utmost bounds of the habitable world. 'Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words into the ends of the world.' Go to the Indians," he says, "on whom the rising sun first looks ; to the Ocean, to those British Isles (so does he speak of us) ; sail to the Euxine ; go to far southern climes ; everywhere will you hear all professing the philosophy of the Scriptures ; with different voice, but no different faith ; the tongues discordant, but the minds in unison."

But beautiful as the passage is, and comforting as the sentiment it contains, yet it is much too general and rhetorical in its style, to found any accurate view upon. The passage quoted from St. Jerome<sup>1</sup> is from a letter from SS. Paula and Eustochia to St. Marcella, wishing her to come to visit the holy places in Palestine. Their spiritual guide, St. Jerome, was supposed to have composed it, and so it passed under his name, but the Benedictine editors are of opinion that it was not written by him. "Christians," they say, "from all the world visit those sacred places. The Briton separated from our world, if he has made any progress in religion, leaving the setting sun, seeks a place known to him only by report and the mention of it in Scripture."

There does not seem in these passages anything to oppose the distinct statement of Bede, as to the prevalence of error. Their tone would rather lead us to

<sup>1</sup> Ep. ad. Marc. tom. 4. p. 2. 441, Ed. Ben. There are several other passages in Jerome to the same effect.

think that the British Church was not very highly esteemed by the rest of Christendom. And quite consistent with this was their condition, when the Bishops in vain endeavoured to resist the progress of Pelagianism. The life of St. Ninian certainly represents the state of the Church to have been such that he could find no complete teaching of the truth, and that it was on account of the errors which prevailed, that he returned as a missionary among them.

As respects schools for theological teaching, there does not seem to be evidence of any previous to the visit of St. Germanus, except perhaps the monastery of Benchor ; and it is doubtful whether this existed at the time of which we are speaking. That there were such schools, however, is not questioned. Indeed, there were among the contemporaries of Ninian, some whose character for learning was acknowledged throughout the Church. Pelagius and Cælestius, sad as is the remembrance attached to their names, were men of distinguished talents and learning. The former, born 354, it has been said, was educated at Benchor, and became superior of it in 404.<sup>1</sup> His abilities and accomplishments were recognized by the best and greatest Doctors ; he was on terms of familiar intercourse and correspondence with SS. Jerome, Augustine, and Paulinus, and highly esteemed and loved by them. The writings of Cælestius, a native of Scotland or Ireland, before he became heretical, were universally admired for their orthodoxy, learning, and virtuous tendency. Somewhat later, St. Patrick flourished, and Fastidius and Faustus later still.

But even if there were schools of theological learn-

<sup>1</sup> Usher de Prim. B. E. p. 207.



ing where such men were trained, of what use could they be, if they did not hold that faith which it was their duty to teach? There may be existing in a country an ample establishment of places of education for every age and every rank, yet what are they worth if the truth has departed? It is the body when the spirit has fled; the salt without its savour; the lamp unsupplied with oil. It is worse. Not teaching the truth must be training the mind in error. And it is not wonderful, though Britain about this time did send out men of distinguished talents, that those who did not humbly seek instruction elsewhere were more or less heretical. Pelagius and Cælestius were almost contemporary with Ninian and Patrick. How remarkable is the different issue of the histories of these fellow-countrymen. Ninian, (and as some say, Patrick too,) with little name for learning, and in their lifetime probably little known in this world, pursue the course of humility and obedience, seek the City for no earthly object, but for the inestimable pearl, the knowledge of Christ—cultivating a saintly character, and prepared at the bidding of their superiors to leave the privileges, and happiness there enjoyed, for the arduous office of converting their heathen and barbarous countrymen. Pelagius and Cælestius, passing from, it may be, the more civilized parts of the island, looked up to, even in Rome, as distinguished men, enjoy the society and esteem of the learned and the saintly—attain name and distinction in the Church—follow their own ways, and leave their memories branded with the awful note of heresy. Of Pelagius's numerous works scarcely a fragment remains. "I went by and lo! he was gone; I sought him but his place could no where be found." "They are like the chaff which the wind scattereth away from

the face of the earth." But "the righteous live for evermore, and his memory is blessed."

But to pursue the course of St. Ninian's history. The time we are speaking of is probably prior to the year 380, and so before the Council of Constantinople A.D. 381, had finally destroyed the Arian party. Then it was that the earnest desire of learning the true faith took entire possession of St. Ninian's mind. He sought instruction from the best teachers his own Church afforded, but could not obtain it. He felt their teaching was imperfect. It did not harmonize with what he knew was true, nor accord with those Scriptures which he had ever studied. He had a teacher within—that inward and divinely kindled Light which illumines the mind of many an unlettered peasant, and gives him a real perception and understanding of the truths of the Creed, and of the sense of Holy Scripture. He had learned the elementary truths of the Gospel, and a religious life had impressed them on his mind as living realities. Thus much light was thrown on the meaning of those Holy Scriptures on the thought of which he had lived from a child. For the knowledge of the Rule of Faith, as St. Aelred, with the primitive fathers, calls the system of Christian Doctrine, was an entering into the very mind of the Spirit, which is the true key to the understanding of His most holy Words. That mind is expressed in various forms, pervading every part of Psalm and Prophecy, History and Epistle ; and we shall best understand them, not by critical investigations into the meaning of words, but by learning more of the mind of the Author ; just as one who knows but in a very slight degree the views of a writer, will apprehend his meaning with readiness and certainty, while one who weighs the words and criticises their

force with the utmost jealousy, will find them full of ambiguity and uncertainty, and at last arrive at a doubtful and probably erroneous conclusion. The Scriptures had been the subject of his constant study and meditation from early youth—of a practical, devout study, that they might be the guide of his life and the model he aimed to imitate, and now the hidden things they contain were being revealed to him, and continually more light thrown upon them, as they were made more practical, and connected with the truths of the Creed.

With this inward perception of Divine Truth, St. Ninian could perceive the inconsistencies of the teaching of the British Ecclesiastics, and its discrepancy from the Scriptures. In him were the words made good, "I have more understanding than my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my study. I am wiser than the aged, because I keep Thy commandments."

Disappointed of help where he most naturally and dutifully looked for it, what was he to do? It was not perhaps to be expected that he should be led into a perfect knowledge of the truth by the light within, independently of external teaching. In the case indeed of an accomplished and highly illuminated teacher, or one precluded from the means of instruction, or as a gift of special grace, one would not presume to limit its possible range. In such cases the development of truth by holy and loving meditation, and devout study of Holy Scripture, may surpass conception. But to St. Ninian the means of further instruction were open, though at a great and trying sacrifice, that of forsaking his home and all that was dear to him on earth.

Before, however, this step was taken, whilst he sought for further teaching, we may conceive his

trials to have been very great. There was the temptation to indifference, to seek no more of that which he already had in a larger measure than most around him, and to turn the thirstings of his ardent mind to those objects, (such as they were,) which occupied the thoughts and aims of most of the young nobles of his time ; and the checks and difficulties he met with would suggest themselves as reasons for such a course. But he was not disposed to feed on the husks of swine after having tasted of that which was sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, more to be desired than gold and all manner of riches—the knowledge of Him who passeth knowledge.

On the other hand, there was the temptation to rest in what he knew, in intellectual self-satisfaction, to feel pride in superior attainments, to point out the errors of others, and argue on the illogicalness of their conclusions—to shew that they could not prove what they maintained, and to make a display. But surely no earnest mind could do this. It was the truth which he desired to know ; to be thought to know it was matter of indifference to him. To prove others wrong could but be an occasion of sorrow, unless it aided himself and them in attaining truth.

A more subtle temptation remained ; to throw himself on the resources of his own mind, to trust to the deductions of his own intellect, either from the text of Holy Scriptures or the doctrines he had already been taught. For this he was too humble. The immensity and awfulness of the subject, and the consciousness of his own imperfections, both of will and understanding, might well make him draw back from so perilous and uncertain a work. Reverence would shrink from touching with a young and uninformed

mind subjects which it only regarded as objects of veneration. Moses was bidden to put his shoes from off his feet before he approached the Holy One. The cherubim cover their heads against the dazzling brightness of the earthly manifestations of Divine glory. It is only where the mind has been trained into the knowledge of the faith, and is influenced by great sanctity and humility, that it can safely use the reason in matters of faith. Others must be content, and if they have the elements of holiness, will be desirous, only to be taught by those of higher attainments than themselves.

What then was he to do ? St. Aelred thus describes his state. "He intently applied his mind to the study of Holy Scripture ; and when he had, in their way, learnt the Rule of Faith from all the most learned of his own nation, being possessed of a discerning mind, he perceived, according to the understanding he had himself by Divine inspirations gained from Scripture, that they fell far short of perfection. Hence his mind was thrown into uncertainty ; and unable to rest in incomplete knowledge, his heart swelled within him ; he sighed ; his heart grew hot within him, and while he was thus musing the fire kindled. What, he said, shall I do ? I have sought in my own country for Him whom my soul loveth, and have not found Him. I will arise ! I will compass sea and land ! I will seek that truth which my soul loveth !"

In this state of mind Rome naturally presented itself as the place to which he should have recourse. She, who for centuries had been the queen of nations, was now attaining a greater glory, as the chief Church of Christendom, the centre of the Christian world—the home of faith and devotion—the point to which all that

was great and good drew as to a safe refuge. High as was her bearing in the eye of the world, yet greater still was the interest which attached to her in the eyes of a Christian. Man saw her noble edifices, her wealth, her power; yet that outward kingdom and glory was but a shell to guard an inner principle of life, and was now breaking in pieces to allow of its development. Here was a Church which the chief of the Apostles had founded and taught, and for which they had shed their blood; a Church which had carefully preserved the faith as it had received it, by the Holy Ghost dwelling in it. To her, as a guide, the chief writers of the western Church had directed those who sought to know the truth; and during the long Arian struggle, she had been the main support of the faith; and the purity of her belief, and the completeness of her teaching were known and acknowledged by all.

“To this Church,” St. Irenæus had said long ago, “on account of its higher original, all Churches must have recourse.” And Tertullian, “Go to the Apostolic Churches to learn the faith. If thou art near to Italy, thou hast Rome, where we also have an authority close at hand. Blessed Church! on which the Apostles poured their doctrine with their blood. Let us see what she hath learned, what she hath taught.” This was the Church, which the Council of Antioch shortly before had called “the School of the Apostles and the Metropolis of Religion;” and Theodosius in an edict, published just at this time, A. D. 380, respecting faith in the ever blessed Trinity, commanded that all the nations under his rule “should steadfastly adhere to the religion which was taught by St. Peter to the Romans, which faithful tradition had preserved, which

was now professed by Pope Damasus, and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria."

These are the sentiments St. Aelred attributes to St. Ninian, in a soliloquy which embodies the views that might naturally be supposed to influence him. "I have in my own country sought Him whom my soul loveth, and have not found Him. I will arise. I will compass sea and land to seek the truth which my soul longs for. But is there need of so much toil? Was it not said to Peter, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it? In the faith of Peter then there is nothing defective, obscure, imperfect; nothing against which evil doctrine or perverted sentiments, the gates as it were of Hell, could prevail. And where is the Faith of Peter but in the See of Peter? Thither certainly I must go, that leaving my country and my relations, and my father's house, I may be thought worthy to behold with inward eye the fair beauty of the Lord, and to be guarded by His Temple." And of the temptation which would draw him back. "The deceitful prosperity of life smiles on me—the vanity of the world is attractive—the love of my relations wiles me to stay—difficulties and personal sufferings deter. But he who loveth father and mother, saith the Lord, more than Me, is not worthy of Me, and he that taketh not up his cross and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me. I have learnt too that they who despise Kings' palaces, attain to heavenly kingdoms."

Such were his feelings. And should it seem strange to speak of a young Briton as making any great sacrifice in leaving a distinction almost nominal in a remote country, regarded as scarcely belonging to the

Roman world, for the metropolis of the empire, the seat of refinement and luxury, of taste, literature, and intellect, of all which was calculated to engage the interest and sympathy of a Christian—should it be thought that the change was one to be gladly caught at—let it be considered that it was not the leaving Britain for Rome merely, which indicated the devotion of St. Ninian. This might have been done from the lowest motives, ambition, curiosity, pleasure, and might not have implied the tearing asunder of any ties ; as many have made pilgrimages from the mere love of wandering. The circumstances and the end determine the character of the action. The sacrifice of worldly interest might have been small ; but it was a sacrifice of all he had, and that without any earthly recompense, and He who rewarded those who left their father, and all that they had, though but an interest in a fisherman's poor stock, would have accepted him.

Relatively speaking however the sacrifice was considerable. If the eldest son, he would hold the rank of Tanist, as the destined successor to the reigning king ; and his country was no longer, as we have seen, that in which the captive Prince had wondered the Romans could envy his poor cottage. Many of its Princes possessed considerable wealth ; in their days of independence they had coined gold and silver, and in all probability still continued to possess hereditary revenues. And Roman manners had introduced even into Britain objects which that wealth might purchase. Their elegant and costly works, their notoriously extravagant luxuries, show that Ninian could have found ways of expending his inheritance which the children of this world would have envied ; baths, and costly marbles, inlaid pavements, and all the elegancies of art. For



objects of ambition he might have aimed, at least, to be the chief among his countrymen ; or by engaging in the service of Rome have risen, as other provincials had done, to high distinction. Even the imperial purple was not beyond the grasp of an ambitious spirit. The British legions about this very time made Maximus Emperor, and the great Constantine has been said to be a native Briton.

But these things were seen in their true colours by Ninian. He had renounced them in his Baptism, and his heart had never returned to them. The world, with its charms of pleasure, its prospects of wealth or ambition, had no hold on him. His real trial was from a deeper attachment—affection to his friends, a sacrifice made more painful in proportion as Christian piety increased his love to them. Almighty God seems ever, as it were, to retain a hold upon us, so as to be able to inflict sharp pain for our correction, or give us the opportunity of overcoming it from love to Him ; and this especially through our affections. Men hardened by ambition, covetousness, and indifference to religion, yet retain deep and tender love for wife or child ; and the loss of them, or the sorrows which befall them, are continually means of awakening them to a sense of religion. So in those who for Christ's sake have weaned their affections from all other earthly objects, their very progress in goodness, while it gives them strength to forsake even what they best love for Him, and keeps them from setting their affections on them, yet makes their love more tender and deep, and the pain of separation in itself greater, entirely though it be compensated for by the overflowings of Divine consolations.

Such seems to have been St. Ninian's chief struggle ; but the remembrance of his Lord's calls, and the great-

ness of his promises, prevailed, and he went out where Christ seemed to call him.

It has been reported that his father had at first wished him to keep in the way of life which his birth and circumstances naturally pointed out, and that it was with great unwillingness that he yielded to his son's desire to give up the world for a life devoted to religion. This however must have been earlier, when St. Ninian gave himself up in his own country to the pursuit of religious truth. Still there is a peculiar pang when a final step is taken, which breaks off entirely hope which may against hope have been secretly cherished; still more when that step took from their home him whose distinguishing sweetness and affectionateness must have made him beloved, whilst he was revered. But all these considerations sank before the great object he had in view, and he left his home, and as his biographers say, "like Abraham, he went out from his country and his father's house."

Two other reasons have been assigned for his visiting Rome. The first is a conjecture of Alford's, that he went to take advantage of the schools, the original of our universities, which had been established on so large a scale, and with so systematic a discipline by Valentinian. They had been instituted in 370, and with a special view to the education of provincials. It is plain, however, that this view is quite inconsistent with the picture given us by St. Aelred. It was for no advantages of secular learning that the humble and affectionate Ninian left his parents and his home. It was the need of religious teaching, of that knowledge which is life eternal, which caused and justified his sacrifice. Besides, the students were not allowed to continue after they were twenty years of age, which would make

Ninian so young on his going there, as to give an entirely different character to his visit. He would in that case appear to have been sent, as it were, to the university by his parents. It is enough to say that this is purely a conjecture, and not only without foundation, but inconsistent with the earlier histories of the Saint. Camerarius again represents his visit as occasioned by the rules of the Culdees, to whom he supposed him to belong, who required those who were to be consecrated Bishops among them, to have previously visited the *Limina Apostolorum*. But this is apparently an anachronism, as the Culdees do not appear in history till above a century after St. Ninian's time.

Leland too places the visit to Rome after he had been engaged in missionary labours in Britain; but he gives no authorities, and mentions the subject so incidentally, and without noticing the different account given in the received Lives, that we should rather suspect him of a mistake in memory as to the Saint's history, than of so slightly opposing the best authorities for the history.

---

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### *St. Ninian's Journey to Rome.*

THE date of this journey we cannot accurately determine. It was certainly before the year 385; for the Pope by whom St. Ninian was consecrated and sent as a missionary to Britain was not the one in whose Pontificate he arrived in Rome. St. Siricius was his consecrator, and he was elected Pope on the death of St. Damasus in 385. Prior then to this date, and during the Popedom of St. Damasus, was the time of

St. Ninian's arrival; and we should conjecture that it was prior to the year 383, as there is not in his Life any reference to the convulsion occasioned by the revolt of Maximus, which introduced great changes into Britain and Gaul, by the emigration of a considerable portion of the British nation to Brittany. Perhaps 381 may be conjectured, when he was twenty-one years of age or upwards.

By the assistance of the Itineraries we may trace the route by which Ninian would travel from his northern home, near Carlisle, to the great city. The road began either on the south of the Solway, or in Annandale, and ran through Carlisle by Old Penrith, where a noble military way may still be traced, thence by the vale of the Eden to Brough, and over the dreary hills of Stainmoor. Here Ninian would have the last glimpse of those mountains within sight of which he had spent his youth, and the remembrance of which, with all the associations of friends and kindred, is so deeply engraven on the heart. He would cross the moorlands and travel along a road which runs by Bowes and Catterick, and which we still enjoy as an inheritance from our Roman conquerors, and so to York.

This was, as we have said, the second city of Britain, the residence of the governors, and the See of an Archbishop, and here most probably the young prince would receive commendatory letters to other Catholic Bishops, and particularly to Rome. Hence he would proceed by the great line of Watling street to London, and Sandwich. This was the port from which they sailed for Boulogne. Passing through Rheims, then an episcopal city, he would come to Lyons, that first cradle of the Church of Gaul, consecrated by the

memory of her martyrs, and her sainted Bishop, St. Irenæus. It was now a great city, but more interesting to St. Ninian, as it was now probably presided over by one who, during the period of Arian trials, had been the firm maintainer of the Catholic faith—St. Justus. He was the friend of St. Ambrose, and Bishop from 370 to 381, when he resigned his office and retired to Egypt, to embrace a monastic life, and end his days in devotion and peace.

The direct road from Lyons to Milan over the Great St. Bernard, was steep, narrow, and impassable for carriages; another from Vienne by the Little St. Bernard, was more circuitous but easier; they united at Aosto. His Biographer especially mentions that he crossed the Gallic Alps, to impress us, as it would seem, with the arduousness of a journey, terrible from its natural difficulties, and dangerous from the robbers who infested it; for not many years before St. Martin had been attacked here, and saved from murder only by a miracle.

He now entered Italy, and came among cities and Churches associated with the names and lives of Saints distinguished in the history of religion; and these would be the objects on which his thoughts would fix. Nature indeed spread before him her most sublime and then her loveliest scenery. The world presented riches and splendour. He might encounter on the road the magnificent equipages and retinue of the wealthy Roman, coaches of solid silver, mules with trappings embossed with gold, horsemen preceding to clear the way, and a train of baggage and attendants, cooks, slaves, eunuchs, marshalled like an army. But he was proof against these seductive imaginations; the *nil admirari* is not so effectually produced by any philoso-

phy as by the calm recollection of the Christian, whose guarded eye does not allow him to forget the shadowy nature of what is seen, and the reality of those things which are not seen ; and he would esteem above all the beauties of nature or of art, the Church in each place he came to, and the pious Christians whom he might meet with.

And there was one of these places which was connected in an interesting way with his own future history—Vercelli, through which the road from Lyons to Milan passed. Its late Bishop, St. Eusebius, had introduced here, for the first time in the western Church, the union of the clerical and monastic life, which was afterwards adopted by St. Ninian. St. Eusebius had died ten years before, but the system was still kept up ; and it may not be out of place here to give St. Ambrose's description of it, as it will by anticipation describe the episcopal life of St. Ninian.

The Bishop and Clergy lived together in one house, shut out from the world, and adopting the way of life of the Egyptian monks, having all things in common, and devoting their days and nights to continued prayer and praise, labour and study. "Can any thing," says the Saint, speaking of their society, "can any thing be more admirable than their way of life, in which there is nothing to fear, and every thing worthy of imitation ; where the austerity of fasting is compensated by tranquillity and peace of mind, supported by example, made sweet by habit, and cheered by virtuous occupations. A life not disturbed by temporal cares, nor distracted by the tumults of the world, nor interrupted by idle visits, nor relaxed by intercourse with the world." Thus, under the eye of the Bishop himself, Clergy were trained up, of whom he personally knew

the blamelessness, piety, and zeal ; while their characters were so esteemed, that other Churches sought their Bishops from him, and many distinguished Prelates were sent out from his school.

In after days, St. Ninian, on the coast of Galloway, might recall to his mind the time when he had seen Vercelli, and the first model of a system which, with some modifications, was soon generally embraced, both by missionaries and in settled churches, and is the original of the chapters of our cathedrals.

The road brought him from Lyons to Milan, which from the year 303 had been the chief residence of the Emperors of the west, and soon assumed the splendour of an imperial city. In the number and beauty of the houses, the gay and polished manners of the people, and the magnificence of the public buildings, it seemed to rival, and not suffer in comparison from the proximity of, Rome. In this place St. Ambrose was Bishop, and even to the eyes of the world that great man would appear the most important object in Milan. The popular voice had taken him from a high civil position to be their Bishop, and he was such an one that Theodosius recognized in him a realizing of all a Bishop ought to be. His people were devoted to him, and his influence could withstand and control the highest earthly sovereigns. And yet so simple was his life that Ninian might have seen or conversed with him. He gave himself wholly to the work of the ministry. Constant in prayer, by day and night, he slept little and fasted daily. Yet he was accessible to all. St. Augustine generally found him surrounded by crowds of persons and full of business. His time which was not thus occupied, and it was but little, was given to refreshment or reading, and he read where any one might

come to him ; no one was hindered, nor was it usual for them to be announced, so that Augustine would come and stay in the room, and leave again, unwilling to interrupt him. He preached every Sunday, and Ninian may have listened to that eloquence which melted the stubborn heart of him who afterwards was St. Augustine, and which we may read with so much admiration.

But Rome was his object, and he hastened forwards. The Via Flaminia brought him to the shore of the Adriatic, to the fatal Ariminum, connected with recollections most distressing to every Christian, and to a Briton still more so, as the scene where the Bishops of his Church had fallen into an allowance of heresy. But better days were coming to the Church ; for whilst the Eastern Bishops had met at Constantinople, and republished the Nicene Faith ; in the year 381, perhaps the very one in which St. Ninian was travelling through Italy, councils were held at Aquileia and Milan, where St. Ambrose was most distinguished for his zeal for the maintenance of the true Faith. Keeping along the coast to the Metaurus, the road there turned inland, and crossing the passes of the Apennines, led on to Rome.

And what a scene must Rome have presented to St. Ninian as he beheld it on his approach, and saw the wide gilded roof of the Capitol, or the gorgeous splendour of the Palatium rising above the innumerable buildings which surrounded them. Or as he passed through the Forums, or under the Temples or Basilicas which overhung its streets, how vast must it have appeared in the multitudes of its people, and the grandeur of its edifices. Above a million, some say many millions of inhabitants, were enclosed within a circuit of



twenty miles. The luxurious villas and gardens which were spread around it, hemmed in the portion occupied by dwellings, so that the houses rose to a tremendous and dangerous height, far exceeding the limit of 70 feet, which law had imposed ; yet these were broken by wide places around on which stood the most magnificent specimens of ancient architecture ; and porticos, arches, columns, and statues, were seen on every side. The palaces of the nobles, now numbered at nearly 2000, from their enormous establishments of slaves, were little towns of splendid architecture, with marble columns and gilded statues, each comprising within itself "every thing which could be subservient to use or luxury, forums, temples, fountains, baths, porticos, with shady groves and artificial aviaries." An overgrown population of poor and idle citizens occupied at an enormous rent the different floors and rooms of the crowded houses, intent only on the daily doles of food and the public entertainments of the Circus.

The pomp of heathen worship still remained, though its privileges and revenues were diminished. Half the senate at least still adhered to the ancient superstitions, and garlands, processions, and victims might be seen, whilst the smoke and odour of sacrifices and incense still rose on every side. The rich, unoccupied by political or mercantile pursuits, spent their days in idle and frivolous pleasures, and a continual round of dissipation. There might be seen the rich senator, in elegant and costly dress, making his way through the streets, attended by some fifty slaves ; or sailing in his barge, screened by silken awnings and listening to luxurious music. Their wealth was enormous, and it was seen in their display of gold and silver plate, the magnificence of their establishments, the number of their

slaves, and the lavish expenditure of their exhibitions and public entertainments. Luxury and refinement seemed to have reached their utmost limit, and the great metropolis of the world to be sinking down, worn out by its own effeminacy.

There were, indeed, schools of learning, supported and regulated by the state, and a great university, to which students from every part of the empire resorted, to obtain the advantage of a Roman education ; and the philosophical professor might be known by his peculiar dress. The teachers were for the most part men opposed to the Christian faith, who, by a revived and modified Platonism, explained away the grosser features of Polytheism, and put forward views of philosophy and morals, which, with the utmost zeal and talents, they opposed to the doctrines of the Gospel. Here Ammianus publicly read his admired history, the eloquent and virtuous Symmachus pleaded almost with fanaticism for the toleration of the religion of their fathers ; and the philosophers (as Eunapius and Libanius) published explanations of the popular religion, and attributed miracles to the distinguished leaders of their schools, which had not long before received a temporary patronage under the apostate Julian.

Such were the varied and strange objects which, so far as it was not Christian, Rome presented to the view of the British stranger, who now made his way along its streets. Nor indeed would the Christian community seem exempt from the corruption of the atmosphere in which it lived. Besides the Catholics, we must remember, there were numerous bodies of heretics, especially Manichees, assuming the name of Christians, and sometimes concealing themselves among

them, who endeavoured, by their subtle disputations, and professions of austerity, to gain over converts from the true faith. These were most numerous at Rome, and lived in a miserable way, dispersed through all the quarters of the city, and though professing a severe life, really given up to self-indulgence, and bringing reproach upon their name by their immoralities and crimes. Here might be seen parties of Sarabaites, vagabond and pretended monks, who lived two or three together, under no rule or government, exhibiting pretended sanctity, as a cloak for indulgence, fasting for display, and when a feast came, giving way to excess. Superstition, too, doubtless existed among the people, and vices inconsistent with the religion they professed. For the good, it has been said, are as grains among the chaff; here one and there one from the accident of their position, stand prominently out, and are discerned almost buried in the surrounding mass, which gives its own complexion to the whole. These things would strike the eye of the casual observer, and it might, perhaps, too, surprise one who had not considered that the Church was a net inclosing bad and good, and that the irreligion and superstition of the mass of men would abuse and discredit the holiest system.

If St. Ninian had not thought of this, there would doubtless be much among the Roman Christians to shock and to distress him. That Church he had looked to, as the model of excellence and the guide to truth; to be taught by her he had relinquished home and friends, and now he saw, even in her bosom, and under the very eye of the Saintly Bishop, gross and evident sin. "I know," says St. Augustine, "that there are many who adore sepulchres and pictures;"

and so by superficial or evil-disposed persons, among heretical or pagan contemporaries, the Church was accused of introducing a new idolatry of martyrs and relics, and substituting as objects of divine worship those whose tombs were consecrated by the veneration of the people.<sup>1</sup> "I know," proceeds the Saint, "that there are many who drink to excess on occasion of burials, and make great feasts, under pretence of religion."<sup>2</sup> Among their testimonies to their generally consistent and virtuous lives, the very heathens we find charging Christians with immorality, with the more earnestness because of its contradicting the rules they professed. Violence, party spirit, ambition, found a place among them. The election of the present Bishop—for at Rome the whole body of Christians had a voice in the choice of their Bishop—had been attended with violence and bloodshed. The clergy were often secular in their habits, endeavouring to gain favour with the rich, and using their influence to obtain legacies; so that the civil power interfered by law to check the evil. The wealthy were infected by the luxury of the age and yielded to the pleasures and dissipation common to their class. It might fall to St. Ninian's lot to witness the sad abuses which were practised on the vigil of some martyr, corrupting the holiest services to evil; abuses such that the celebrations themselves were suppressed by St. Ambrose, and the abuses provided against, by the influence of St. Augustine.

But indeed, how could it be otherwise, when the

<sup>1</sup> As by Eunapius and Faustus the Manichee, quoted by Gibbon, c. 28, notes 60 and 88.

<sup>2</sup> St. Aug. de Moribus Eccl. Christ. l. c. 34.

world was flocking into the Church. "In speaking against such men," is St. Augustine's answer, "you do but condemn those whom the Church herself condemns, and daily labours to correct, as wicked children. It is one thing that we are commanded to teach, another we are commanded to correct, and forced to tolerate till we can amend it." For the last seventy years the emperors had been, with few exceptions, professed Christians; they had encouraged the same profession in others, and men influenced by the consideration of worldly interest, and with no serious sense of religion, would outwardly embrace it. And let us not forget that by doing so, faulty as the motive might be, they yet brought themselves and those dependent on them, under a holy discipline, and to the enjoyment of privileges, and inward influences, which might prevail in their children's case if not in their own, and lead them to eternal life. Still this prevalence of an external profession could not but have the effect of lowering the apparent standard of Christian holiness. It needed a counteracting influence, that the Church might still be the light of the world and the salt of the earth; and it found it in the visible separation from the world, and eminent sanctity of those who followed out their baptismal vows by the relinquishment of all earthly ties, and the professed adoption of a religious life. The Holy virgins and monks it was who now kept alive the flame of piety, and were, so to say, the soul of the Church. And their holiness testified perpetually against the unworthy lives of others. This is ever to be kept in mind when we read (as in St. Jerome or St. Sulpicius) of the evil and worldly lives of the clergy of their time. They had before them high living standards of the devotion and sanctity

suiting to the Christian calling, and saw more vividly any departure from it. It was the disciple and biographer of St. Martin, and the monk of Palestine, the admirers and advocates of perfect self-denial, and the ascetic life, who chiefly speak of the evils prevalent among Christians. That they discerned these evils implied that the principle of right, the conscience of the Church, was sensitive and whole. There are ages where Christians so lose the true standard, that they are unconscious of their loss.

This may guard us against misjudging the Church which St. Ninian now visited, whilst in endeavouring to pourtray its real condition, we repeat what contemporaries have said of the evils which existed in it.

Externally indeed the Church of Rome had now attained to great splendour and magnificence. The time had come when the wealth of the nations poured in to her, and "she decked herself with jewels as a bride doth." The very Christians who had endured the last and most trying persecution of Dioclesian, raised up more splendid Churches than he had destroyed. Long before, during her earlier persecutions, the sacred vessels were of gold and silver. Martyrs suffered because they refused to give up the holy trust, and we know the details of them from the very inventories made by the spoilers.<sup>1</sup> If, then, confessorship be an argument for sanctity, and sanctity for a perception of the truth, we have this authority for decking with magnificent adornings the Christian Churches, as the Jewish Temple was by Divine command. In Rome, the Basilicas had been given to the Church, noble oblong buildings, with rows of columns

<sup>1</sup> Bingham, 8. 6. 21.

running lengthwise, and forming, as it were, a nave and aisles. Other Churches were erected over the tombs of Martyrs, where the awful service of the Christian Sacrifice was performed, according to the majestic and simple Liturgy which the Church had received from St. Peter. The taste and magnificence of the present Pope had contributed much to adorning the sacred edifices, and enhancing the grandeur of the services. For the continuous praise of the ever blessed Trinity he had provided for the chaunting of the Psalter night and day, with the Doxology as we now use it. He had built two Basilicas, and given costly offerings of gold and silver vessels to others. Around the altars, lamps of gold, and wax lights in massive candlesticks, burnt by day and night, dispelling the natural light. The perfumed cloud of incense rose up in the solemn service of the Mass. Gold and silver vessels, and precious stones furnished and adorned the Churches, and garlands and flowers hung around ; nay, the devotion of the people made them hang up, on cords of gold, memorials in precious metals of the blessings they had received in answer to their prayers, or through the intercession of the Martyr, over whose grave the Church was raised.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the Churches and Services of Rome, and so deeply was St. Ninian influenced by them, that his first work, on returning as a Missionary into Britain, was to build a Church after the Roman fashion, and there with the Faith of the Roman Church, to introduce her custom in the celebration of Divine offices.

<sup>1</sup> Bingham, 8. 8. 2.

There was one object of surpassing interest, to which first he made his way—the Churches where the martyred remains of St. Peter and St. Paul were laid. The body of St. Paul had been buried a little distance from Rome, on the Ostian road, where his Church now stands ; that of St. Peter, on the Vatican, probably by the Jewish Christians who lived in that quarter. Afterwards part of each was laid beside that of the other, in vaults in their respective Churches, that as they were lovely in their lives they might not be divided in death. These were recognized as their burial places at the end of the second century, and at this time, St. Jerome says, “the Bishops of Rome, offered the Holy Sacrifice to God over the revered bones of departed human beings, and considered their tombs as Altars of Christ.” The Vatican, where the more splendid vault and Church were placed, was known as the Confession of St. Peter and the *Limina Apostolorum*. Hither sentiments of devotion drew Christians, at this time, from all parts of the world, emperors, consuls, and generals, says St. Chrysostom, devoutly visited the sepulchres of those who in their lives had been lowly in the world, but were now exalted.

To seem to be, were it only in imagination, brought near to those chiefest of the Apostles, and most blessed Martyrs, must have been esteemed by St. Ninian a singular privilege. It is a natural sentiment which men of all ages are affected by. “We move,” said the philosophic heathen, “in those places where there are, as it were, the very footmarks of those we admire and love. For my own part Athens itself does not so much delight me by exquisite and magnificent works of art, as by calling to mind those greatest



of men ; where each was wont to live, to sit, and to discourse ; and their burial places I look on with the intensest interest." How much more to a Christian to trace in Rome the places which had been consecrated by the footsteps, the blood, the very remains, of the Apostles. To recall the image of St. Paul, the aged prisoner, his deep knowledge of Christian Truth, his zeal, his constraining eloquence, his patience, his charity ;—or of St. Peter, full of love for his Lord, of humility, of readiness to die and to prefer a death of pain for His sake. It was the belief that their spirit and doctrine were preserved here which brought St. Ninian from his distant home. Rome had killed them—Rome for which they had laboured and interceded ; and the blood of Martyrs, like that of their Lord, cries for mercy on their persecutors, and brings blessings on the Church for which they had shed their blood. So they became the life of Rome. Persons taking a mere external view saw this. Rome went to decay, and "like Thebes, Babylon, or Carthage," says the historian of her fall, "its name might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honour and dominion. Two Jewish teachers," (so he speaks) "a tentmaker and a fisherman, had been executed in the circus of Nero, and five hundred years after their relics were adored as the Palladium of Christian Rome : " and a glory and a kingdom were given to it before which the ancient empire sank into inferiority.

To these shrines St. Ninian came, with a heart full of devout sentiments ; with gratitude that he should have been brought to this great object of his desire ; that he, a Briton, from almost another world, might approach the very remains of the Apostles ; and with

earnest prayers for the furtherance of his designs. "He shed tears," as the simple narrative proceeds, "before the holy relics of the Apostles, as pledges of his devotion, and with many prayers commended his desire to their patronage."

---

## CHAPTER V.

### *St. Ninian's Life at Rome.*

After having thus performed his devotions at the tombs of the Apostles, St. Ninian sought the Pope, and laid before him the object of his journey. It had long been usual for Christians, in travelling from one part of the Church to another, to take with them commendatory letters from the Bishop of their own Church, which should be an evidence of their being in the Catholic Communion, and a recommendation to the Churches which they might visit. Such we suppose St. Ninian to have brought and to have presented to St. Damasus, who had now for nearly twenty years occupied the holy See, having been elected at sixty years of age, in 366. By this aged saint he was most kindly received, and the object of his leaving his home and seeking the Church of Rome, heartily entered into and approved. St. Damasus, himself, was a man of taste and learning. Some of his sacred poems and official letters have come down to us. He was also a great encourager of learned men, and prompted them to undertake works for the service of religion; one especially, the Translation and Commentaries on the Scriptures by St. Jerome, was the fruit of his

suggestions, for which alone he deserves our gratitude. This saint was probably with him about the time St. Ninian came: he resided at Rome for two years, at the wish of the Pope; and assisted him in these last years of his life in writing those important letters, on many nice and important points of doctrine and ecclesiastical rules, which the See of Rome, consulted and appealed to from every part of Christendom, had continually to send out. And it may throw light on the real character of St. Damasus, who is said to have wrought miracles in life and after death, to consider him as supporting under strong unpopularity the austere and simple mannered Jerome, and selecting him as his confidential adviser; and as entering, with the kindness and interest of a father, (for he embraced him, it is said, as his own son,) into the views of the devout Ninian, who, from a simple desire after the knowledge of Christian Truth, had given up all the world had to offer him. For, outwardly, St. Damasus lived in a splendour which emperors might envy, and had a mind which delighted in great and magnificent works. Whilst Christian Bishops in general lived with simplicity, external humility, and often in poverty, the Bishops of Rome were surrounded by pomp and grandeur. But under this external splendour how often in every age has there been concealed a true poverty of spirit and a self-denying life. St. Jerome, who knew well the character of the Pope, and whose sincerity and severe standard of Christian holiness renders his testimony most valuable, designates him as "of holy memory."

St. Ninian was received by him with the utmost kindness, with, as has been said, the affection of a father. He laid open the object for which he had come to Rome;

and how highly does it speak for the deeply devout character of the Pope, now nearly eighty years of age, that he should enter into and approve a course which had about it so much which in other matters we should call romantic. How rarely do we find the aged capable of entering into the feelings of the young, in cases especially, where worldly interests are concerned, and the usual course of action is departed from. The mere natural disposition of old men leads them to look on the self-forgiveness of the young as a kind of folly, which experience and sobriety of spirit will wean them from. Such is the temper to which intercourse with the world, and the downward and hardening tendencies of our evil nature, incline us, even towards what is right, and good, and noble, in the temperament of the young. But not such is the aged Christian. He has learnt by experience the true value of that Pearl of great price, and the worthlessness of the world's best treasures. In him love has been warmed and deepened ; and self-sacrifice become a practical and habitual principle. So that, whilst he has the discriminating eye which sees the true path of duty, and distinguishes between a course suggested by mere emotion or self-will, and that to which the guidance of the Holy Spirit leads the youthful scholar in the saintly life, he yet is not wanting in the fullest sympathy with all that is noble and disinterested in his spirit. The Christian mind is one in all, and produces a mutual sympathy in those in whom it exists. Diversities of race and climate, of station, age, employment, which swallow up the whole character in others, are but an outside clothing to Christians, and fade away before the unity of that in which the moral being really consists.

And age and youth love to dwell together in sympathy and peace.

Ninian was placed by St. Damasus under the care of teachers, who instructed him systematically in the doctrines of the Faith. He was, as Bede expresses it, *regulariter doctus*. We do not, indeed, know what provision was made for the teaching of Christian doctrine to individuals. It would seem as if, as yet, it had not assumed any very systematic shape. From the first, the teachers (Doctors) formed one class of the Christian ministry. They whose gifts, extraordinary or ordinary, qualified them more especially for the office of instructing others in the Faith, would be employed in preparing converts and catechumens for baptism ; and it seems most probable that they would themselves advance in the study of Holy Scripture, and the Christian writers, and in the further training up of others. And this was one use of the Minor Orders of the clergy, in which, according to the rule of the apostle, they served a sort of probation for the diaconate ; and under the eye of the bishop, and the teaching of the Doctors, prepared themselves for the higher offices. At Alexandria the Church taught all learning, human and divine. In other Churches, secular and preparatory knowledge of the arts and sciences, was learnt from the established heathen institutions ; and Christian knowledge from their own Clergy.

Under the care of his present teachers St. Ninian had every reason to rejoice in the step he had taken. "The youth, full of the spirit of God, perceived that he had not run or laboured in vain, as he now understood that from their unskilful teachers, he and his countrymen had believed many things opposed to sound doctrine." He met with that satisfaction which the mind

feels in the consistency of the truths put before it ; and still more the peace resulting from the confidence which such harmony inspires, that it is indeed the truth itself respecting the Supreme Object of his desire, love, and reverence ; and not a shadow which it grasps instead. And the Holy Scriptures, now explained in their true sense, harmonized with the doctrines inculcated.

The advantages he enjoyed, in this respect, were very great. The Roman church was indeed the school of the true faith, and in its atmosphere heretical teaching was at once discovered. The controvercies of the day had caused the truth on the most essential Doctrines to be elicited and defined ; and for the interpretation of Scripture, the learning, and deep and clear understanding of the Sacred writers, possessed by St. Jerome, if not directly engaged in teaching St. Ninian, must yet, without doubt, have had their influence on those to whom St. Damasus committed him for instruction. It was the time, too, when the spiritual understanding of Scripture was being brought out so much by St. Ambrose. And all the teaching he then obtained, whether from the lips of his instructors or the writings of the great teachers of the Church, was eagerly learnt and carefully stored up by St. Ninian for his present comfort, and to be brought out in future years for the instruction of others. In St. Aelred's words. "Applying himself with entire eagerness to the Word of God, he drew from the views of different teachers, as the laden bee from various flowers, the rich honey with which he filled the cells of wisdom, and stored them in the hive of his heart, to be kept there, to be meditated on, and afterwards brought out for the

refreshment and support of his inner man, and the consolation of many others."

It was indeed a worthy recompense, that he, who for the love of the truth had thought lightly of home, country, wealth, and pleasures, should, so to say, be led into the innermost shrine of truth, and admitted to the very treasures of wisdom and knowledge ; should receive for carnal, spiritual ; for earthly, heavenly ; for temporal, eternal goods. He was happy. For he had now found a home ; for what is a home but a place where we meet with abiding sympathy—where we feel we can repose on those who love us, and whom we love. He had left a home which was dear to him ; one which he might well and holily love ; but he had found another, where he had what his own home could not give, the knowledge of his Saviour. He had a new father in the holy Damasus, and guides and directors in his wise teachers, and doubtless many brethren, for not in vain would he pray, "Let such as fear Thee, and have known Thy testimonies, be turned unto me. And Rome was full of objects for a Christian to admire and love.

It so happens that, chiefly from St. Jerome's letters, we know much of the spiritual history of the Roman Church, and of what occurred there about this time, and as St. Ninian must have been influenced by what was going on, and our estimate of what he was must be to a greater degree formed by knowing the characters held in esteem at that day, some longer reference to them may be excused.

For the first two or three years of his stay St. Jerome was residing there, beloved and esteemed by the good for the holiness of his life, his humility, and learning. Intimately associated as he was with St.

Damasus, particularly in his theological studies, it is not unnatural to suppose that the young enquirer after truth had opportunities of drinking in the lessons of wisdom from his lips. For the Saint suffered, it is said, from sore eyes, and so was led to spend more time in oral teaching and conversation. One of his chief employments was to answer the enquiries of those who consulted him on the interpretation of Holy Scripture, and he was ever ready to afford the benefits of his instruction to those who sought it. There can be little doubt that St. Ninian would earnestly desire to hear him, or that opportunities would be given him.

Not long after his arrival another event occurred which must have been most interesting to him, and have made him feel as in the very metropolis of the Church. In the year 382, a council was held in Rome, at which Bishops were assembled, whose names have ever been honoured, and whom St. Ninian through life might remember. St. Ascholius, Bishop of Thessalonica, was here, the intimate friend of St. Athanasius, one who had laboured in the conversion of the Goths, a work like that to which the latter part of St. Ninian's own life was to be devoted. St. Epiphanius, too, the aged Bishop of Salamis, and Paulinus, of Antioch, had come with St. Jerome, and spent the winter of 382-3 in Rome, lodging in the house of the holy widow St. Paula. Epiphanius, now above seventy years of age, had lived through the troubled times of Arianism. He was the scholar and the dear friend of the sainted hermit, Hilarion, and his own life had for many years been spent in religious solitude, whence he had derived a severe and unbending character, and was now highly honoured in the Church. St. Ambrose was here, and lodged in the house of his



sister, St. Marcellina, to whom he was indebted for the blessings of a religious education, and for a bright example of sincere piety. She had thirty years before put on the religious habit, and devoted herself to a life of singular holiness in retirement, silence, and prayer,—the secret cause, it may be, in some degree of that glory which shone forth in her brother.

It was a time when many Roman ladies of high rank and wealth retired from the world, and devoted themselves in their own homes, and with their near relations, to the exercises of religion and works of charity. Each house was a little monastery, where prayer and praise, and fasting and watching, dwelt with love and abundant almsgiving, and works of mercy for the souls and bodies of others—widowed mothers, with their daughters, giving up the enjoyment of wealth and station, and withdrawing to be nearer God. Such was the natural way in which, before the systematic introduction of monastic rules, pious Christians adopted a mode of life which enabled them to serve God without distraction, in prayer and the practice of charity.

Such was St. Marcella, whom St. Jerome calls the glory of the Roman ladies. She had, after losing her husband, early endeavoured to imitate the ascetics of the East, of whom she had heard from St. Athanasius. She refused to marry again, and employed herself in works of devotion and charity. Her example was followed by many noble maidens, who placed themselves under her care, and many religious societies were formed in consequence.

One of the most distinguished of her spiritual children was St. Paula, whom she had comforted on the death of her husband, and induced to forsake the world. St. Paula was descended from one of the

noblest Roman families, and had given up great riches and a high place in society, to seek consolation in God. She had now adopted a life of retirement and poverty in the possession of wealth, enquiring out the poor and relieving them with her own hand. "She could make," she said, "no better provision for her children than by drawing on them by her alms, the blessings of heaven." Her time was chiefly spent in religious reading and prayer. She avoided the distractions of society, seeking only the edifying conversation of religious people. At her house, as was said, St. Epiphanius and Paulinus were lodged, and St. Jerome was her spiritual guide during his stay in Rome. There were many others, some of whom, in the society of their own families, formed religious retreats; others united together, under the guidance of a holy and experienced matron. It is most interesting to see the way in which these associations sprung up. The spontaneous growth, as it were, of a deep sense of the truths of religion, and of love to God and man. The example of the solitaries of Egypt had but to be set before them, and they whose hearts were prepared followed it. A few were influenced at first, and from them it spread to greater numbers. They were possessed with the desire of leading a heavenly life on earth, and embraced it under such forms as naturally suggested themselves. We call their houses monasteries, but they are so different from what we usually associate with the name that it is apt to mislead us. They were simple and natural associations of religious persons, living in ordinary dwellings, and devoting themselves to a strict life of silence, abstinence, and prayer, to labour and works of love; and they might rise up spontaneously in any

Church where there was the spirit which at first gave them birth.

The monasteries of Rome, as being religious communities formed in the very heart of the city, are highly commended by St. Augustine. 'The religious lived together, under the care of a virtuous and learned priest, maintaining themselves by their own labour, ordinarily having but one meal each day, and that towards night ; some fasting for longer periods, even for three or more days, but no one being forced to undergo austerities he could not bear.' It was most natural for St. Ninian to join some such body ; for he was separated from his country, without any ties in the world, or any home but what the Church offered, and so to unite himself to a body of like minded brethren, in a society of religious men, living together under some rule, was the obvious course by which to seek for support, sympathy, and improvement. Here he was free from the wretchedness and the sights of evil which a life in the city would bring. He might live in silent study, or laborious occupation, enjoying the blessing of undistracted attention to Divine things, without the chill of solitude, the presence of his brethren assisting him to realize that of those unseen Beings who are ever around us. The examples of holy men, seen in their daily round of employments, their humility, recollection, patience, industry, and self-denial, how great a privilege to one who was endeavouring himself to grow in grace, and to learn to copy what was good and profitable in others. And that he adopted this course, which was what the most religious people of his time would do, is confirmed by the circumstance, that St. Siricius, who chose him to be

a Bishop, particularly favoured the practice of selecting the Clergy from such monastic bodies.

Thus St. Ninian lived for the next fifteen years, fifteen years of what is called the best part of a man's life, gradually advancing in that holiness which was afterwards manifested in his works on earth, and his availing power with heaven; growing in gentleness, self-devotion, and recollection, and meanwhile making progress in the depth and accuracy of his views of Divine truth, and in the understanding of Holy Scripture. It was, according to men's present views, a long time to spend in comparative inactivity, where the missionary life was that for which he was destined. It was, as they say, shutting up in a cloister, power, and energy, and goodness, which might have been more usefully engaged in doing good to others. But very different from the hurried eagerness of men for immediate visible results, is the calm majestic march of the Divine dispensations, and the course of those of His servants in whom they are imitated. He waited four thousand years before He undertook His work. He would have his servants well matured in knowledge and love before they take in hand the offices they are designed for, and is willing that there should be a long and seemingly unprofitable toil, in preparing deep and strong foundations for the structure He would raise. One well prepared and sanctified character exercises far more influence for good, than many ordinary ones. Such an one is a true standard of what we should aim to be, and as such attracts the hearts of those who are prepared to receive the truth. He is fit to guide, and by his deep practical wisdom, and weight of character, has a constraining power over even unwilling minds. St. Ninian might have engaged early in

missionary labours, and have been as others are. He waited, growing more and more in holiness ; and he went forth to work miracles, and to convert the nations.

Nor should it surprise us, that so long a time should be spent in the study of Divine truth. Nearly as long a time given exclusively to that highest object of the human mind, was not of old thought too much for preparing one who was to teach others. It is our low standard of theological attainments, which makes a few months seem enough to prepare for expounding the mysteries of the Gospel ; and it is our diversion into matters only accidentally connected with Theology proper, which leads us to conceive the knowledge of the divine unnecessary, if not prejudicial to his practical usefulness in influencing the hearts of men. Criticism and Antiquities, Church History and Evidences, viewed externally, and by themselves, are thought, and rightly so, to be of little use to one who has the care of souls. But such is not the case with Theology, properly so called, that is the knowledge of what we are to believe, and what we are to do ; the more exact knowledge of Him, Whom truly to know is everlasting life ; the true vision of Whom keeps the soul and its affections in their right position, whilst errors and false views distort and deprave them ; this is real Theology. It is Dogmatic Theology which contemplates, defines, and gives exactness to our views of that truth by which we are sanctified ; Controversial Theology, which enables us to guard the truth from corruption, and to watch against the first inroads of error. Surely, to a holy mind such contemplations are alike the highest employment of the understanding, and tend most to his own sanctification, and his power of teaching others.

St. Thomas, the most profound of schoolmen, was the most devout of Saints, and the most powerful preacher. His prayers are among the choicest treasures of the Church. His sermons awakened and converted the most ignorant and hardened sinners.

And as regards Moral Theology, with its handmaids, Casuistical and Ascetic, contemplating what we ought to be, and to do, in principle and detail, and how we may attain to a saintly temper ; what time and thought can be too much for attaining to exactness of knowledge here, by one who is really to be a guide to others ? How many nice points are to be determined ! How many difficult questions in the treatment of the souls of men in their varied spiritual conditions ! What grave consideration of duties and principles ! It betokens indeed that men have fallen into a low religious condition, when they cannot even estimate the value of deep and long continued study on such subjects. If it be kept in mind that Theology, rightly so called, is the knowledge of God, and how we may please Him, it will be evident, that as the one great requisite for the study of it is a holy life, so it is the first business of the Clergy to attain proficiency in it, and that no extent of real attainment can be too much—they ought to draw all their care and study this way. This will be the guide of their course of study, and will arrange in due subordination the various other branches of knowledge, and enable them to derive from each what it can minister to their highest end. It will secure the knowledge of those truths which are essential, will determine the extent and the end for which we should pursue the rest. No subject of human knowledge will then be without its use and due position.

Of the course of study St. Ninian would go through,

we may form probably a very fair notion from a Treatise of St. Augustine, written not long after, designed to direct the studies of those who were to be teachers of others.

The main object to which he directed the student was the right understanding and explanation of the Holy Scriptures. This seems to be viewed as the chief business of the Christian teacher, and it is to this end that all other studies are made subordinate. But first, he was to know those principles to which all interpretations must be conformed—the principles of Christian Faith, Hope, and Charity. Of Faith, in the full knowledge and understanding of the Creed ; of Hope, and of the sum of evangelical morality in the love of God above all things, and of our brethren in Him, and for His sake ; and any interpretation which is inconsistent with these principles, whether as sanctioning immorality, or erroneous doctrine, must be wrong. Next, presupposing that the student has, by personal religion, entered on the steps of wisdom, beginning with the fear of the Lord, he is to learn the rules and principles of literal and spiritual interpretation, the latter being the chief study of the expositor. In connexion with this, he is to acquire a knowledge of Scripture criticism, of the right text, and translation ; of history, natural science, logic, and all other subjects which may be useful to him as subsidiary learning. Lastly, he is to study how to express to others what he himself has learnt, by acquiring the art of Christian eloquence. The first and second of these subjects we may conceive would form the principal part of St. Ninian's studies, the doctrines of the faith and Christian love, and the spiritual interpretation of Scripture, for both of which he would find so

great assistance in the works of contemporary writers, or of those who had gone before ; as well as by the oral teaching of the doctors, of the Roman Church.

So much of apology, if it be needed, for St. Ninian's living for fifteen years, in what the world would call a comparatively narrow sphere at Rome, but really, in a life of labour, thought, and constant endeavour after improvement.

Every thing here combined for his advancement in fitness for his great destiny. Rome was the centre of the Christian world. Errors and disputes were heard of, examined, and determined there ; each improvement in the rules of holy living, each practical advancement in Church discipline and conduct, was brought into this great resort and emporium of the Christian world, while the steady orthodoxy of the Church enabled it to look with discrimination on the opinions and practices which rose up around it.

The details of St. Ninian's life here are quite unknown, but general history relates many events, which must have exercised an important influence upon him.

Within three or four years after his arrival, St. Ninian sustained a heavy loss in the death of his kind patron, St. Damasus, who died the tenth of December, in the year 384 ; being then nearly eighty years of age. He was succeeded by St. Siricius, who, twelve years after, was to consecrate and send out St. Ninian. For some time he was unacquainted with him, as was natural in so large a Church, and when St. Ninian did not occupy a prominent place. St. Ninian, therefore, deprived of the friendship and countenance of St. Damasus, was left to go on in the ordinary course.

About this time he was, most probably, admitted to the minor orders as a Reader. For we have the



rules which St. Siricius sent to the Church of Spain, immediately on his election, February, 385, in which he determines the regular gradation of offices. One who from infancy was devoted to the service of the Church, was to be baptized before he was fourteen, and placed in the rank of Readers. If his life was approved till he was thirty, he was made an Acolyte and Sub-deacon, and if judged worthy, a Deacon, after having previously made a promise of continence. Then, after five years' service, he might be admitted to the Priesthood, and, after ten more, to the Episcopate. Such was the long probation and service for the sacred ministry in those days. And though, very probably, in St. Ninian's case, as in others, peculiar circumstances might be a ground for departing from it in some points, we may suppose it observed on the whole: and that he went through the regular course of clerical offices in Rome.

Meanwhile important events were occurring around him ; events in which the whole Church has since been interested. The conversion of St. Augustine and his baptism at Milan, occurred at Easter, 387 ; and the latter part of that year, after the death of his mother, and whole of the following one, he spent at Rome. It is not unnatural to suppose that he and St. Ninian might meet ; the more humble talents of the Briton, being in the eyes of St. Augustine far more than compensated by that spotless purity of heart which enjoyed the blessedness of seeing God. The one baptized in infancy had by habitual obedience, kept his robes unstained. The other, washed from a load of actual sins, was now at the eleventh hour labouring more than any, and by his zeal and earnestness making way beyond them.

About this time, too, the Emperor Theodosius visited Italy, and great exertions were in vain used to prevail on him to favour the depressed cause of paganism ; it was his resolution which led to the entire fall of the ancient superstition. His visit to Rome in 389, gave the last blow to idolatry. He entered the city with Valentinian, and then it was that the most distinguished families embraced Christianity, the Anicii, Probi, Pauli, Gracchi. The people ran in crowds to the Vatican, to venerate the tombs of the Apostles, or to the Lateran to be baptized ; but few adhered to the ancient superstitions. The temples were filled with cobwebs and soon fell to ruin ; and the idols were left alone under their roofs with the owls and the bats.

The time was now approaching when he was to be called to that work for which the providence of God had long been training him. Year after year had passed, and, to himself, it might seem as if he was doing but little service, and was an unprofitable servant : but a preparation was going on in the practice of humble obedience, and in His own good time God called on him to take his great work in hand. The duties of the offices he had been placed in, afforded an opportunity for his good qualities to be seen and generally recognized. Purity, wisdom, and circumspectness, are the points specially mentioned ; and those of them which may be considered as intellectual gifts, are just of the kind which would be formed and developed by religious principles ; the absence of hurry and excitement, calm considerateness, a fair estimate of others, are the natural fruits of that confidence in God which trusts that all will be controlled for good, which sets their true value on the things of the world and the

events of time, and so is without anxiety ; of charity, which despises no one, but sympathizes with their difficulties, puts itself in the place of others, and enters into their views ; and of honesty and simplicity of aim, which has no bye ends to entangle, or duplicity to involve it. It is from these qualities that wisdom in counsel springs. And to be gradually entrusted with offices of responsibility, in subordination to higher authority ; the learning practically to rule and to be ruled, in the successive steps of the lower clerical offices, was the very means to form the mind of the future saint to this prudence in judging and circumspection in acting. And his excellencies by degrees became generally matter of remark, and brought him under the notice and, ultimately, into esteem and familiar association with St. Siricius.

“While he was spoken of by all as chaste in body, wise in understanding, provident in counsel, circumspect in every word and deed, he rose to the favour and friendship of the Pope himself.”

The advantages to be derived from this position were, we need not say, very great, in fitting him for the work in which he was to engage ; and the knowledge of it gives us peculiar means of ascertaining the views which St. Ninian entertained on many important subjects, and which he brought into our own country. For we know those of St. Siricius, and considering that after this intimate acquaintance with him the Pope fixed on him as the fittest person to correct the errors which prevailed among the British Christians, we cannot doubt that Ninian's views coincided with his own ; the more so as his professed intention was to teach in Britain the doctrines of the Roman Church.

The decretals of St. Siricius sent to the Church of Spain in 385, have already been referred to ; they recognize, it need scarcely be said, a monastic system, as an established custom, approved and encouraged by the Church. A strict penitential discipline and the celibacy of the Clergy are presupposed as right, regulated and enforced. A formal expression of the same views was elicited by the heresy of Jovinian, who, amongst other errors, maintained "that virgins have no more merit than widows or married women, and, that there is no difference between abstaining from meats, and using them with thanksgiving." With these easy doctrines it is no wonder he had many followers at Rome ; persons who had long lived in continence and mortification, married and returned to a soft and unrestrained life. It did not, however, number any Bishop among those who embraced it, and in the year 390 an assembly of the Roman Clergy was held, and the doctrines declared to be contrary to the Christian truth ; and by the unanimous advice of the Priests and Deacons who were present, and we can scarcely doubt St. Ninian was among them, Jovinian and his followers were excommunicated.

## CHAPTER VI.

*St. Ninian's return to Britain.*

AND now we may pass to the time when the Saint was called to the high duties of a Bishop and a Missionary. The activity and vigilance of St. Siricius prompted him to act upon those feelings of sympathizing interest which give to every Church which is a healthy member of the great Catholic body, a deep concern is the welfare of every other part. If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. Still more should he feel it who occupied the chief See of Christendom ; on whom, in an especial manner, it seemed incumbent to watch and provide for all, to support the weak, to correct the erring, and to convert the unbelieving ; and Siricius seems particularly to have felt this interest in our remote and despised country. It was compassion for half taught and misguided Christians, for heathens and barbarians, for whom the Son of God had shed His precious blood—for immortal beings, who, unrescued, might perish for ever, but by the power of the Gospel, would be exalted to everlasting bliss, and swell the ranks of the Angelic choirs. It was compassion, such as two centuries afterwards moved his successor, the saintly Gregory, to yearn over the wretchedness of our Saxon ancestors. These feelings in their case would go beyond the ordinary compassion which Christians generally would have ; they would feel with the blessed Apostle that they had the care of all the Churches, and that the weak and the scandalized were the special objects of their sympathy.

And in the case of St. Siricius there was happily one at hand peculiarly suited for the work before him. St. Ninian had waited long for this call to the office for which Divine Providence had all along designed, and been preparing him. Perhaps he would have no thought of undertaking so great a work, or if ever a desire had crossed his mind to impart to his countrymen the unspeakable blessings he had himself obtained, it might be repressed as not to be thought of, till some guiding of Providence, or obedience to authority should determine it to be his duty, and sanction his undertaking it. For it is not to be imagined that Ninian had forgotten Britain. How should he? Means of communication were regular and speedy; events of moment were frequently occurring; his countrymen, who, as we have heard, made religious visits to the Holy Land, would often draw to the city, to offer their devotions at the tombs of the Apostles; others would resort among the provincials for the advantages of the schools; others again, like himself, for religious improvement. Of one such we know, St. Piran, the Cornish Saint, whose Church in the Sand was recently brought to light. He was a native of Ireland, and born about 352. When about thirty years of age, and so nearly at the same time as St. Ninian, having received some imperfect information about the Christian Faith, he travelled to Rome for more complete instruction. He is supposed by the Irish writers to have been consecrated at Rome, and returned home, accompanied by four Clerics, who were all afterwards Bishops. With them St. Ninian would hold converse, and hear the language, which, harsh as it may seem to us, would sound sweet in his ears, as the language of his home. By these means his information and in-

terest in Britain would be kept alive. And when the holy Father, whose authority and wish would be a command, called him to this work, we may imagine that with his deep humility, and shrinking from an office, to which he would seem quite unequal, there would be some warm feeling kindled, in the hope that he might be a blessing to those he loved so well.

In St. Aelred's words, "The Roman Pontiff had heard that there were in the western part of Britain some who had not yet embraced the faith of our Saviour,<sup>1</sup> some also who had heard the word of the Gospel, but from heretical or ignorant teachers ; and by the impulse of the Divine Spirit, he, with his own hands consecrated this man of God to the office of a Bishop, and sent him with the Apostolic Benediction to this people."

This event most probably occurred in the spring of the year 397. The date is determined by a circumstance which is on other accounts interesting, and intimately connected with the history and future character of St. Ninian. It is, that on his way to Britain,

<sup>1</sup> It is most probable that attention was drawn to the condition of the British of this district, by the publication of St. Jerome's work against Jovinian, which occurred in the year 393 or 394. It was written at the request of some Christians at Rome, and excited great interest there. In the second book he mentions, that he had himself, when a youth in Gaul, seen some of the Attacotti, a British tribe, who ate human flesh ; and adds still more revolting details as to the habits of their people. This tribe occupied the country between Loch Lomond and Loch Fine. Such a statement could not fail to excite enquiry, and lead the Pope to ascertain the real state of the unconverted people, who, being of the same race, were within the limits of the empire. The mission of St. Ninian was the natural result.

he visited St. Martin of Tours, whose name had recently been made known through the whole Church, by Sulpicius's life of him. Now St. Martin, according to the best authorities, died in November, 397. The life in question was a narrative, written by Sulpicius, for his friend St. Paulinus of Nola, without any view to its becoming public. It was however communicated by Paulinus to others, and so spread with unprecedented rapidity. This occurred within a year before the death of the Saint, for it was after the death of St. Clare in the previous November. And the sensation it produced in Rome, and throughout the Christian world, was incredible. The booksellers having at command only the slow process of the human hand, could not have it copied so fast as to meet the demand, and could sell it at almost any price ; it was considered the most gainful work they had ever had. No book was so much read, or so eagerly sought after ; it was in every one's hands, and every where the subject of conversation. For it related of a living Bishop so near them as in France, sanctity almost unequalled ; and miraculous powers, such as were not then possessed by any one ; and these recorded in graceful language, with the Latinity of the purest ages, and the unaffected simplicity of a friend writing to a friend of what he had himself seen and known ; and with the deep and affectionate reverence of a disciple, for one who had guided him by example and instruction into the ways of holiness and peace.

From this work, St. Ninian, as St. Aelred relates, ardently desired to see and converse with the holy man whose ways were depicted there, and accordingly, on his way to Britain, diverged to Tours to visit its Bishop.



We too have the beautiful picture which Sulpicius has drawn, and for St. Ninian's sake, that we may know the sort of person whom he looked on as a model ; and for our own, that we may in this way see the Saint ourselves, we will go along with him to the Hermit Bishop, whom our northern Churches venerate so highly.

St. Martin had long lived as a recluse, and when the people of Tours would have him, in spite of his poor clothes and mean appearance, to be their Bishop, he kept up his holy solitude as much as he could, in a cell adjoining his Church. This however proved more liable to interruption than he wished, so he went into a lonely spot a mile or two from the town, where a sweep of the river left a level grassy plain, which was shut out from the country on its landward side by a line of precipitous rocks, and accessible only by difficult paths. Here he fixed his abode, and to him gathered others who desired to be under his guidance, and forsaking the world, to imitate his humble and mortified life. They were about sixty in number ; some lived in cells built by themselves, many in caves in the rocks ; and that in solitude, except when they met for prayers, or at their meals, and labouring, many by copying books, for their own support. Above all, the Saint himself drew the hearts of holy men to him by his humility, meekness, and deep knowledge of religious truth. He was quite an illiterate man, yet readily solved the difficulties of Scripture. But his real life was hid with Christ, and he was in continual communion with Him, unceasingly praying, either by direct supplication, or the inward lifting up of his soul to God. His humility was remarkable ; he judged no one, he condemned no one ; he was never irritated, never depressed by sorrow, or excited by mirth,

but ever bearing in his looks a kind of heavenly joyfulness. Christ only was on his lips, and in his heart compassion, piety, and peace. Besides all this, there was an awfulness thrown around him by the visible tokens of the Divine presence, in the miracles he had wrought ; miracles which have a degree of evidence rarely to be met with.

To visit this saint, then, so marked by traits of personal holiness, and the awful manifestations of Divine authority accompanying his deeds ; was the object of St. Ninian on his way to Britain. "He diverged to Tours, says St. Aelred, filled with the Holy Ghost, and touched by an eager desire of seeing him."

Meanwhile St. Martin, had been prepared for his coming. "By the grace of prophetic illumination, the virtues of the new Bishop were not unknown to him. He was taught that he was sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and would be the instrument of the salvation of many ; and, in consequence, with what joy, devotion, and affection, did he receive him." Their time was spent in holy converse and aspirations of divine love ; Ninian, doubtless, being eager to learn from so great a saint, and profiting by his readiness to solve the difficulties of Scripture, and to speak of Christ, and the rules of holy living. He also gained another advantage. His wish was to introduce religion into his country in its completeness, to present it before his people, not only in the statement of doctrines and rules of practice, but as visibly embodied in the Church, and manifested in her sacred services ; it was his intention to imitate, "as the faith, so the customs of the Roman Church in building Churches and arranging the services ;" and he requested St. Martin to furnish him with masons for the work. "In the tabernacle of the Lord

two columns are joined together, and two cherubim stretching out their wings touch each other ; now borne up on the wings of virtue they withdraw to be with God ; now standing and letting them fall they condescend to their neighbours. So these saints returned from heavenly objects to the things of this world." At last they parted. "They had feasted on their mutual conversations as on heavenly banquets, and separated with embraces, kisses, and tears shed in common. St. Martin remained in his See. Ninian hastened to the work for which he had been sent forth by the Holy Ghost."

Such is the sympathy of holy men ; such their love, seeming not to need the usual preparations of human friendship ; but as they each have advanced towards the one model, the image of Christ, enabling them to understand each other at once.

On his way through France and Belgium, as Camerarius reports, St. Ninian was anxious to labour for the conversion of the people, and great numbers were the fruit of his preaching. The authority however is very recent, and though he may be regarded, like other later writers, as preserving and perpetuating a tradition of a much earlier date, the evidence is so slight, that we must leave the matter simply to recommend itself by its internal probability.

And now, after an absence of many years, St. Ninian is again in sight of the shores of Britain, and gazes on its white cliffs as he nears his native land. But greatly is he changed. He had gone forth, young, uninformed, seeking to be taught the truth. He returns in mature age, with solid judgment, deep knowledge, confirmed faith, commissioned to instruct others, and to impart to them those true views of doctrine, and those

many lessons of holy living which he had been storing up. But with how great a responsibility did he come, and with how little earthly help. In Rome he had been surrounded by those who sympathized with him, and were engaged in the sacred pursuits he had been devoted to ; counsel, consolation, and aid were ever at hand. Now was he to stand alone, with a half barbarous people around him, whom he had to labour to convert, or to correct, scarcely knowing how they would receive him, or how he should find access to their minds.

On the part of his countrymen however the greatest interest was felt in him. We know how strongly the inhabitants of remote districts are interested in those who have left the seclusion in which they live, to make their way in the world. There is among such people a strong feeling of community, which makes each one a relation as it were to all the rest ; and if one goes out from his native village to make his way in a larger sphere, deep interest is felt in his success, and a desire to hear of him. The old remember him as a child, and his father and father's father. The young were the companions of his boyish days. If he becomes distinguished and honoured, all seem to have a share in it. And Ninian had been a youth whose goodness and engaging manners would especially gain their affections. He was a Briton, the son too of one of their own princes, to whom it was natural they should cling with peculiar attachment as associated with the remembrance of what their tribes had been ; for amid the improvements of Roman civilization, many ardent spirits would look back on the wild glories of their uncivilized days, and cherish the recollection of the renown and independence of their race. We may imagine

the interest with which they would hear of the esteem in which their young countryman was held, the position which he occupied even in the chief city of the world ; and the joy with which they would receive the news, that he was to be restored to them as their Bishop. He was the son of their king, but he had humbled himself by relinquishing secular dignity, and now was exalted by a far higher spiritual office. The children of this world, the more they valued its gifts of wealth and power, the more they would conceive that he had made a sacrifice ; and they who had the opportunity of seeing any thing of the peace and joy he had in Christ, would see that he had not been wrong in making it. Here was a living instance of giving up the world for Christ. What it was to be a Prince they saw, and they would think much of it. The Bishop might have had these goods of wealth and honour, but he preferred to be a servant of Christ, and of the people of Christ, to struggle with poverty, to submit to hardships, to overcome ill-will, unkindness, and obstinacy, by meek endurance. The sacrifice they could appreciate ; and when they heard him speak of leaving all to follow Christ, and of taking up the cross, his words would come home to them, for what he said was real ; it had an interpretation in his own doings.

This will in a measure account for the great success which attended the first opening of his work amongst them. It is described as an outbreak of enthusiasm, which ran through the people, and enabled him at once to do the work of years.

If he preached at all as did the great models of his day, we cannot wonder at it. They preached as men who realized what is unseen, for the great truths of eternity were the groundwork of all they said ; and they

came forth from deep and earnest meditation on these truths, to speak of them to others, with earnestness and affection, their own minds being filled with the ideas and affections which corresponded to them. As one who had really seen some land of bliss, or awful suffering, or impending danger, they spoke of them in a natural and real way, and by their very sincerity, and the vivid impression of their own conviction of all they said, they carried others along with them. They could trust to the spontaneous flow of their minds, for they had been schooled by severe lives and serious thought, to deep awe and reverence, and been trained in the full and exact knowledge of Christian truth ; and as Bishops almost exclusively were preachers, they had long time for thought, experience, and sobriety, before they undertook so high an office. They could speak freely, for they spoke of what they really knew by personal experience, and long acquaintance with the ways of holy living ; and this without erroneous and vague statements, or the risk of irreverence, familiarity, or excitement.

It was the age of Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Augustine ; and Ninian came into Britain, as it were, from their school, with all the fulness of view and varied thoughts which an acquaintance with Christians and Christian Theology, in its highest form, would give. And this was expressed to the Britons in their own language ; that language which, unlike most of the other subjects of the empire, they still retained and cherished, and which would be more likely to be preserved and usually spoken in remote and mountainous districts, as Cumbria and Galloway. And we know how it gladdens the hearts of the Celts of these days, in Wales and Ireland, to hear their own language, and

how they think no harm can come in it ; and can imagine what the Britons would feel at hearing it from St. Ninian.

It may be they were of the same imaginative and susceptible temper which we find in those remains of their race, for the effect of the Saint's preaching was immediate and very, great. "Crowds of people collected together and came to meet him ; there was unbounded delight among them all, and wonderful devotion. Every where did the praises of Christ resound, for they all held him as a prophet. At once, the active labourer, entering his master's field, began to pull up what was ill-planted ; what was ill brought together, to disperse ; to pull down what was built amiss." This was his first beginning. "Afterwards, having cleared the minds of the faithful from all their errors, he began to lay in them the foundation of the holy faith ; to build the gold of wisdom, the silver of knowledge, and the stones of good works. These all he taught by word, exhibited by example, and confirmed by numerous miracles."

---

## CHAPTER VII.

### *St. Ninian in Galloway.*

THE province which was assigned to St. Ninian seems to have been the western portion of our northern counties, and the Scottish Lowlands, south of the Wall of Antoninus. In the direction of the heathen, it was, of course, unlimited ; the field was open for him to convert all he could. In Scotland there were, pro-

bably, very few Christians ; in the English portion they were but partially converted and very ignorant. What arrangement was made between the new Bishop and the Bishop of York, or of any unknown See, in whose diocese this country was lying before, we cannot tell. The British Bishops might gladly receive amongst them a missionary Bishop, as they afterwards did St. Germanus, to assist in eradicating evil and promoting the good of their people ; or there may have been some definite district assigned to him ; and of this it may be that a trace remained in the limits of St. Kentigern's diocese of Glasgow, which seems to have taken the place of St. Ninian's, and extended to the Cross on Stainmoor.

This district was occupied by different tribes of Britons, having the same language and character, except that those in England were more influenced by Roman civilization. Those to the north consisted of five tribes, whose country had been formed into a new province, by Theodosius, A. D. 367, under the name of Valentia. They lay between the two walls, and were in an intermediate state of civilization, between the inhabitants of the ancient provinces, who had for centuries been under Roman influence, and the wild unsubdued inhabitants of the Highlands. Their country was but partially occupied by the Romans, who used it chiefly for military occupation and defence against the Caledonians ; and though the inhabitants were Roman citizens, those who lived in the more remote portions of the district probably differed little from the barbarous state in which Cæsar had found our whole island.

It was among the English portion of his people that St. Ninian first laboured. His history implies that, as was natural, he first went among his own people and



the friends of his early years, to impart to them the inestimable benefits he was commissioned to diffuse ; and in accordance with this, Leland distinctly speaks of his first mission as being to the coast of Cumberland, between St. Bees Head and Carlisle.

The circumstances of the country were not, however, such as were in any way suited for his long continuance or permanent establishment there. Cumberland lying just within the southern wall and being filled by military establishments,<sup>1</sup> was now the scene of warlike preparation, and the fearful anticipations, and miserable realities of a bloody and exterminating warfare. It was a time of bitter distress to the Provincial Britons ; and sad, indeed, was the sight presented to St. Ninian. The peace and tranquillity he had left in his native land was at an end. It was just the time at which the wild hordes of Picts, who had been restrained whilst the vigorous hand of Theodosius held the reins of empire, were again, a year or two after his death, coming like a flood over the fair fields and rich and civilized abodes of the Provincials. In the following year, 398, it was necessary to send two additional legions into Britain to save the province from utter ruin ; and it was now but thirteen years before it was finally abandoned by the Romans.

St. Gildas has depicted in strong colours the savage invaders, and the wretchedness of the helpless Provincials. It needs, however, no exaggeration to represent the greatness of their sufferings. They had long been shielded by the power of the empire. Four legions evidence alike the danger from the barba-

<sup>1</sup> There were stations at Moresby, Ellenborough, Burgh by the Sands, besides Carlisle and Penrith, and those at Stanwix, Bowness, and along the line of the wall.

rians and the security of the inhabitants. They had, from the first, been taught to forget their warlike habits in the luxuries of ease, and to delight in a slavery which presented itself in the form of comfort and refinement. The works of long continued peace—the improvements of civilization—the beauty of their cities—their costly and elegant houses, now fell before the destroyers, whose cupidity they had excited. Hardy and warlike Piets poured from the fastnesses of the Highlands ; poor, uncivilized, unclothed, what the Britons themselves had been 300 years before. Their ill-will was increased by the very circumstance that their countrymen had identified themselves with the invaders, whose yoke they had themselves with difficulty avoided. Rapine, bloodshed, and cruelty followed in their course, and the Provincials, unable to cope with them, were driven from their peaceful homes, and witnessed the destruction of their cherished possessions, and the death of their dearest friends. Such were the miseries which met St. Ninian on returning to the home of his childhood, and led to his retiring to a more peaceful district to establish his Church. It is not improbable that he was accompanied by some of his family, who might seek a refuge on the retired shore of Galloway, from the rapine and harassing inroads to which their old homes were exposed. We find, at least, that his brother was his companion in after years, and, as one ancient Life reports, his mother and relations were settled near him. His father may have died before he saw, on earth, the face of his son, or witnessed the blessings which he brought to his countrymen. He was removed from the joy of seeing the fruits of Ninian's preaching ; from the distress of beholding the calamities of his country.

The plan which St. Ninian proposed to adopt for carrying on the work of a missionary Bishop, required a place where he might erect a Church, where he might himself permanently live, and form a religious society. For this it was most important to select a position which would be retired, and secure alike from the interruptions of a rude soldiery or the outrage of barbarian tribes. And the place which he chose was singularly adapted for his purpose.

The country between the walls was the very ground on which the battles of the contending armies would continually be fought ; like the suburbs of a besieged town, which neither party spared, but made the arena of their mutual combats. To the south-west, however, the extensive promontory of Galloway stretched beyond the scene of war, and being guarded by the sea on either side, had on the whole remained almost undisturbed by the changes which had gone on around it. It was removed from the ordinary course of the invading Highlanders, and had not itself any objects to attract their rapacity. It had scarcely been affected even by the Roman power. Agricola, in the year 83, had contemplated an expedition to Ireland, and with this view, had overrun the country ; roads had been made, and encampments formed, but, afterwards, as he seems not to have had any object in pursuing the natives into their fastnesses, its remote situation made it little frequented by the Romans. It appears to have continued without giving much occasion for military establishments, for few Roman remains are found in it.

What is now a bare and uninteresting district, where the slow progress of plantations endeavours to compensate for the want of natural wood, was then covered by thick forests, and occupied by Britons,

living in all their uncivilized simplicity. The tribe was called the Novantes ; and Ptolemy mentions their two towns as Rerigonium and Leucopibia. The latter was the one which St. Ninian fixed on as the site for his Church. It was conforming, so far as he could, to the ancient rule, to fix the seat of a Bishop in a city, that the shepherd may be where his flock principally are found ; and in this place the greatest number of Christians would be gathered. Of its identity with Whithern there can be no doubt, and the very probable and generally received conjecture is, that the Leucopibia of our present copies of Ptolemy should be Leucoikidia—Whitehouses ; so identifying its three names, Leucoikidia, Candida Casa, and Whithern, which is derived from the Saxon ærn, house. Baxter suggests that it is so called from the practice of the Celts (he says Picts, but there were no Picts in Galloway till long after this time) to white-wash their houses. It seems most probable that the name was prior to St. Ninian's arrival, and not derived, as commonly said, from the Church he built ; for whatever be made of the latter part of the word, Leuco speaks for itself, and Casa like ærn, seems rather to indicate an ordinary dwelling than a Church. There had been a castra stativa close adjoining the town which is the only Roman position traceable in Galloway ; and a road which Agricola had formed along the coast, had been continued to Leucopibia. But in their present pressing circumstances, the encampment doubtless would be abandoned. The town itself lies but two or three miles from the extremity of the promontory, which branches off from the main one of Galloway, and running far into the sea, forms almost the most southern point of Scotland. It is thus

without access by land except on the north ; and being naturally difficult of access, and out of the direct line towards Ireland, is now one of the most retired places in Scotland. Few had any inducement to visit it from the north ; and its southern and western sides are guarded by lofty and precipitous rocks, and only here and there afford access for vessels.

Here, then, St. Ninian might securely fix his See, removed from the troubles and dangers which occupied the rest of Britain ; and hence go forth to traverse the wild woodlands for the purpose of evangelizing the people. At the same time, the town was probably, as we may judge from the encampment and the road, one of the most important which the natives had. While, the promontory, called Burrow Head, which rises near it, is seen from and commands a view of the extensive diocese in which his lot was cast.

One looks with interest at the position of the Minsters of York or Lincoln, which are conspicuous through the whole surrounding districts—ever present remembrances of Divine Truth, and marks of him who sits there the spiritual father of the flock. Such was the position of St. Ninian's See. As you stand on the fine headland, with sea on every side, you almost look down on the mountains of the Isle of Man, which rise out of the sea, before you. To the right stretch the successive promontories of Galloway almost to Port Patriek ; the hills of Wigtonshire, Kirkeudbrightshire, and Dumfriesshire, rise in successive and lofty ridges, from the shores of the Solway, to the north ; while, due east, you may trace the coast of Cumberland, to St. Bees Head, or even to Blackcomb, backed by its fair blue hills, so picturesque in outline ; and as the light and shade alternate on the view, you may make

out each bay and headland, and even the white houses by the shore. Surely this was a place where the Saint might stand and survey the field in which he had to work. He had given evidence enough that he was no idle dreamer or slave of weak affection. Still we may well suppose that when he looked down from this central point, and had before him headlands and mountain tops which marked out the wide district committed to him, he would regard with especial tenderness, the distinctly marked shore where he had been baptized and spent his youthful years ;—those hills which he had looked up to from his home. They would recall the remembrance of those who were gone, and awake more fervent prayers for his country, now in the scene of distraction and warfare.

We have said that the manners of the people had been but little affected by the influence of the Romans. It is probable that their way of life was very much what that of the Britons had been before they were refined by Roman colonization, or as those of their neighbours the Mœatœ, who at the beginning of the third century inhabited barren mountains and marshy plains, had no manured or cultivated lands, but fed on the milk and flesh of their flocks, or what they got by hunting, or some wild fruits ; fish they never ate, though they had great plenty of them, and when in the woods they fed on roots and herbs.

There still remain in Galloway, circles, and Cromlechs, and Cistvaens, traces of what St. Ninian might see lingering as a broken, but still living system. The Druid religion was proscribed by the Romans. It was a strong, too strong a bond to be allowed to remain among the Britons ; but the superstition was still deeply rooted in the minds of the people, and a reve-

rence long after hung around the enclosures which had been consecrated by Druid rites. At present therefore they must have been in a wretched religious condition ; the public exercise and ministers of their own religion, were proscribed, and the truth had made little progress amongst them. There were indeed Christians, but in an ignorant and ill-informed state ; and to revive religion amongst these persons, and to correct their errors, was one great part of his work.

St. Ninian's plan was not merely to disperse Clergy in separate districts through the country, but to concentrate his strength in one point, and there to have a Church in some degree worthy of the design for which it was intended. The Churches of the Britons were generally of wood. In the cities no doubt, when the Romans had introduced their arts, and wealth abounded, the Churches, like the other public buildings, would be of stone ; but in remote and poorer places where wood was plentiful, it was more natural to make them of that material. It was ready to their hands ; stone they did not need, and could not afford, and might not have the art of working ; as St. Ninian had contemplated in taking his masons from Tours. Bede speaks of the Church as built of stone in a way unusual among the Britons. His words probably apply to the form as well as the material of the building, as he afterwards contrasts the Churches of the Picts with the Roman fashion. These Pictish Churches, and those of the Britons of Bede's days, and of the Irish, were of wood ; such they now are in Norway, where neither skill nor labour are spared in the beauty of the workmanship with which they are adorned.

St. Ninian however desired to use materials for his Church, which, by their strength and permanence,

might image forth the perpetuity of that Kingdom to which it belonged ; and in which the services might be performed with becoming dignity. He had Rome in his mind ; and as he had there doubtless planned what he would raise on the wooded shores of Britain, he might often now in thought return to the majesty and splendour of the Ritual and Churches of the Apostolic See ; so that whatever simplicity and poverty there might of necessity be elsewhere, the Cathedral at least would afford a model of what was aimed at, and which might be copied in their measure by the other Churches. Such doubtless was the practice, that the Mother Church of the diocese should be the place in which the due order of Divine Service might be kept as a guide to the rest.

Natural piety would move St. Ninian to this work, as indeed it had all along been near his heart. But it must also have been very important in its effects on the people, as a perpetual witness to the truths he taught. That we should give of our best to God, and that what is spent on places specially dedicated to His service is in some more immediate way given to Him, is a natural sentiment. This sentiment is implanted in the human heart, in common with those others which seem to have produced every where, among people who had any sense of religion, an external form and expression of it. Places appropriated for sacred services, where God was believed to be especially present ; an order of men set apart to serve Him, offerings of our best and costliest possessions, and grace and beauty in the ornaments of His House, and the conduct of its services,—these are the spontaneous dictates of the heart, and carry with them the evidence of their being a part of natural religion, as well as what we



commonly call such. Surely it is with this view that we should look on the fair forms of ancient art, their temples, their graceful processions, their choric poetry, as the offering of natural piety to the Supreme Being. Corrupted and polluted it is true they were, but so were the fundamental doctrines of essential religion ; and as we are used there to sever the overlaying errors from the elementary truths, and think it no prejudice to the Divine original of the true portions, that corruption should have attached to them, so let us regard the ceremonies of the heathen, and the taste and wealth they lavished on them, as the yearnings of the human soul after Him, to Whom it desires to do all homage.

And the consideration was very important in reference to the conversion of the heathen, as well as to the maintenance of religion among Christians ; for instead of falling in with their true and right notions as to what a religious system ought to be, we may by a neglect of external Religion directly clash with what they conceive we ought to do, which they will the more deeply believe, the more they are prepared by natural piety for embracing the Gospel. Instead of Churches, by their very forms and ornaments, and services, being silent and ever present preachers of the truth, embodying practical devotion, as being its fruits, they may give the lie to our professions, and hinder the reception of religion. We have power, we have generally wealth. Ninian had not much of either, yet he made no delay, but made it his first work to build the house of God on a scale which excited the admiration of the people, and suited the high purposes for which it was set apart.

It was during the time the Church was building, that

is, in November 397, that St. Ninian was divinely warned of the death of St. Martin, and so deep was the veneration he entertained for that holy man, that he dedicated the Church under his name ; a name it afterwards retained, though when the Saint by whom it was built, and whose remains were laid there became more known, it was commonly called St. Ninian's, and is spoken of as dedicated to him.

In Rome they built the Churches over the tombs of the Martyrs, and so dedicated them to their memory, and in other places it was usual to deposit some of the remains of a martyr under the altar of the Church, which was to be consecrated, a practice observed by the great Saints of the age. At Whithern however there was no martyr, and St. Ninian had not brought any relics, so it seemed as it were providential that St. Martin, one of the greatest Saints of the age, though not a martyr, should yet be honoured thus, and he to whom St. Ninian owed so much be regarded as the patron of his Church, and the model to be perpetually kept in view by his people.

I pass by the story which the present tradition of the country reports, that St. Ninian first settled in the Isle of Whithern, three or four miles from the present Church and town, and afterwards removed to that which was his ultimate position. It seems incompatible with the history, which speaks but of one place, and that the one where he at first engaged in building his Church ; for it was in progress at the time St. Martin died, that is within a year after his arrival in Britain. There is an old dismantled Chapel, as it were a land-mark, on the top of one of the hills in the Isle, which the people connect with St. Ninian, and consider the oldest Church in the kingdom, as if it

were his Church. It is however much more recent than even the ruined Church of Whithern ; it is a plain oblong Chapel, with very thick walls, and one narrow pointed window in each of the sides, with niches, and the other recesses usual about the east end : a lone deserted place without roof, which from its thick walls and simple form, suggests the notion of great antiquity ; but certainly is not connected with St. Ninian.

At Whithern then he gave a visibility and local habitation to the Church. The service of God would here be daily celebrated with the simple dignity which befits the image of heavenly things, and the unseen presence of Saints and Angels. The rites which the Roman Church had derived from her founders, or introduced in after times, as the spontaneous expression of the spiritual mind, the language, if we may say it, the very bearing, and graceful movements of the Spouse of Christ, would there be embodied, and form after the like model the minds of those who came to worship, or abode continually in her courts. With the building there was a society of religious persons formed, living with their Bishop, consisting of Clergy to maintain the unceasing services of the Church, to prepare for the higher offices, or to teach the people, and of laymen, who sought here to lead a devout life under the shadow, and within the very walls of the sanctuary.

That St. Ninian should form such a society was antecedently probable. The monastic life had been introduced and sanctioned in the western Church by the most revered men ; and the association of Bishops with their Clergy or other religious people, had been recently adopted by those whose judgment St. Ninian would be most guided by. St. Siricius, it has been

said, preferred to choose Clergy from monks ; what then was more natural than that the Bishop should himself form, and rule such a society ? He had himself to probably lived in one at Rome, and would love its religious calm for the sake of his own improvement.

For the account of this indeed and the remaining events of St. Ninian's life, and the institutions and system which he adopted, we are chiefly indebted to the accounts of his miracles, which form the rest of St. Aelred's life. But this, for obvious reasons, will not appear a valid reason for questioning their truth, considered as common facts. A long time, certainly, had elapsed between St. Ninian and St. Aelred ; and though we must put at a much higher date the composition of the life, from which St. Aelred derived his history, still some considerable time may have intervened, during which we must trust to the traditions of his Church. It may then be said we have little evidence for these facts ; we have, however, all which the circumstances of the case admitted. And we have this in particular that they were believed by men, who had much more means of judging than we possess. They were believed, I mean on the whole, for it is very possible that Alcuin, St. Aelred, and the Scottish Church generally, received them as they were handed down, not attempting to distinguish—to receive part or to reject part, where they had little or no grounds for making such distinction. To us however they convey much real information as to the way of life of the Saint. I do not mean by mentioning circumstances which might have been inserted by the narrator ; but by the facts which form the very groundwork of the story, so that if the miracle was believed, which it must have been in very early times, it must

have been the case that these facts were also generally believed. And a general and early belief in common facts would be admitted as evidence by many who would hesitate to receive it for uncommon ones, particularly if these common facts were what might otherwise be expected. Nay, we may go further ; they who consider that St. Ninian was a friend of St. Martin's, engaged in the work of converting a barbarous people, and who are familiar with the authentic history of the saints of that age, will look on miracles as things be expected, as what under the circumstances were natural ; and so they will, in the same way, give an assent to the miraculous narration, as what may very possibly, at least, be true ; though from the nature of the evidence they would not positively affirm it in each particular case ; and in the same spirit they may praise God for His glories thus manifested, as they may for those of His natural works, though they are in doubt or error as to the physical facts. Hymns are not the less religious because they are philosophically untrue ; nor is the piety unacceptable which saw traces of the deluge in the shells upon the mountain top, though recent investigations have taught us to doubt of their connexion.

To return, then, to our history ; it appears that one of St. Ninian's earliest works was the formation of a religious community, where he and his Clergy might live together, having all things in common. It is of course most probable, that he adopted the plan from those of St. Eusebius of Vercelli, St. Augustine, and especially St. Martin, and that his society, as theirs did, would consist of laymen as well as clergy.

The evident advantages of such an institution led to its general adoption in the missions of the following

age. It was a home where sympathy, support, and counsel, might be had from men like minded, and engaged in labouring the same great ends. Hither men were gathered, who desired to serve God more entirely than they could do in the world, to lead a heavenly life, in contemplation, prayer, and praise. It became a very school of sanctity, where men earnestly desiring virtue associated round one of known sanctity, to be guided by him in their way to heaven, to copy the traits of holiness in him and in their brethren. Thus was a body formed which gave light to others, so that men were drawn out of the contaminating and lowering influence of the world, and brought together under a strict rule and with a professed aim after holiness.

And this must have been of singular importance at a time when Christianity was now becoming the religion of the many, and whole nations were being converted. It presented a difficult problem to the heathen philosopher, how the mass of society could be renewed, when the few in whom the principle of goodness was implanted were scattered, unseen, and lost among the numbers who surrounded them, and by whose way of life, as they possessed no higher visible standard, they were lowered and corrupted. The Gospel undertakes to effect it by gathering out these scattered instances of goodness, and uniting them in one visible society, by the tie of a professed standard of practice ; to be a city set on a hill, a light put upon a candlestick ; providing, moreover, for training up, and forming the characters of others, by instruction in the truth, and a life regulated by holy discipline. Such was the Church itself, in its first ages, when the few Christians were closely bound together, and broadly distinguished from the unbelievers who surrounded them. At the time, however,

when this was no longer possible, when the world came into the Church, and all were members of that society, it pleased God gradually to introduce into the Church itself minor combinations of its holiest members, who, without the danger of individual profession, and bound by obligations which humbled them in the thought of their shortcomings, might continue as memorials of what had existed in a former age, and schools and models of practical religion. We have schools for all other arts, for all those acquirements which need rules and practice, and, above all, imitation, seeing how others do what we wish to learn. In secular matters we recognize the advantage of an experienced teacher and corrector, of being united with others engaged in the same pursuits, and of the improvement derived from observing how they attain to excellence, or how they fail in the minute details of their daily work ; surely it is only reasonable to have some similar institutions for learning the most important and the most difficult of all acquirements, that of a holy life, and the practice of the varied graces of the Christian character. How many a practical difficulty might thus be solved ! How many a soul which had entangled its course, and rendered its perceptions of duty obscure and uncertain, might here be relieved ! The chief part of Christians have duties in the world, and they have, amongst the Saints, patterns and guides for leading a devout life in the discharge of those duties : but some are ever called to a life where they may serve God more directly, and these are especial means of keeping up the general tone of religion, and supply helps and encouragements, as well as a true standard, for those who are in the world.

Such may the Saints of Whithern have been, pre-

senting by their purity, meekness, heavenly mindedness, and peace, a specimen of what the fruit of Gospel righteousness is ; a contrast to the pride, and worldliness, and violence, which reigned among the heathen ; and a special means of attracting to the Church, all in whom the elements of purity and goodness had life and activity. Devotion was the end of their association and their rules—to imitate on earth an angelic life ; to this all was subordinate ; for this they rose betimes, they fasted, they watched, they kept a constant guard on their senses and their thoughts. Thus to please God they cultivated all Christian graces, humility, obedience, and love ; they were silent to converse with God, turning their eyes from the objects of earth, that the mind might see those of heaven, and seeking in this life to be cheerful, resigned, and happy. The system of the monks would necessarily have its modifications when adopted by clergy, whose office called them to be accessible to their people, to go out on journeys and to preach and to administer the Sacraments to a scattered people. But even then they carried with them in silence, recollection, and prayer, and the devout saying of their Psalter, the spirit and the practices of their holy home, and by their gentleness and humility would win over the poor and simple people among whom they laboured.

They probably supported themselves by their own labour, and such voluntary offerings as might be made to the Church. The former belonged to their life as monks, the latter as clergy. Their chief food was vegetables ; leeks are especially mentioned ; these were the produce of a garden of their own, which was under the care of one of the brethren, whose business it was



thence to provide the supply necessary for their daily repasts. It was a simple life deriving support from the grateful earth ; a condition which maintained in them a continual dependence on Him who feeds the young ravens, and enabled them to sympathize with the poor ; as being themselves without provision from day to day, and having really made themselves poor for the sake of Christ. Nor should it surprise us that at times they were almost in want of the necessities of life ; since, for some time, St. Ninian had to struggle against much opposition, and his labours seemed to produce scarcely any fruit.

It was in such a time of need that the traditions of Galloway represent the Saint as receiving a supply of food by miracle. And before we allow ourselves to judge lightly of the simple tale, let us recall the numerous instances in Holy Writ in which miracles were wrought for supplying bodily wants ; perhaps there is no class of which the cases are so many. The Bishop and his brethren went one day into the Refectory, but their usual meal of leeks and other herbs did not appear. The brother who should have provided them was called. He had only the disappointing tale to tell, that they had no provisions left, all the leeks had been put into the ground for seed, and none remained for them to eat. Perhaps it had been a bad season and their garden crops had failed. The Saint bid him go to the garden and bring what he found. He was astonished at the command, knowing there was nothing there, but habitual obedience and the thought that the Bishop could not command any thing without good reason prevailed. He went, and behold, the process of nature was anticipated, and the herbs were found not grown up only

but in seed. There is a very useful lesson at least taught here, to obey though it seems useless ; difficulties vanish from the path of the determined.

And by this simple way of life, and the exercise of useful arts, as the Egyptian monks made mats or baskets, and the cultivation of their garden, and afterwards by keeping flocks and herds, they would suggest many a useful lesson to the uncivilized people around them, and introduce among them improvements which were otherwise unknown. This has ever been a part of the work of missionaries in barbarous nations, tending to the real improvement of the people, winning a way to their good will, and teaching them to look up, in things spiritual, to those who were so willing and able to help them in earthly concerns.

But there was one other object to which St. Ninian made his monastery especially subservient. His own religious history, the wants he had felt, and the privileges he had enjoyed, and the very design for which he had returned to Britain, would lead him to regard sound theological training as of the utmost importance for his clergy. He had himself sought in vain for those who could teach him the truth ; he had seen the evils which resulted from the want of a steady holding to the right faith, in the unsettledness and spiritual deadness which prevailed. He had come to remedy those evils. Where could it be better effected than in his college ? This was healing the fountain, it was providing that those who, each in his own sphere, was to teach others, should himself be in doctrine as well as life a model for them to imitate. The advantages he had enjoyed at Rome he came to impart to Britain ; and the monastery at Whithern was the place where

the system of theological teaching he has known there would be adopted for his own clergy.

He would himself first, as they were able to bear it, lead them into a full and exact knowledge of the truths of religion, by such a course of oral and catechetical instruction, as would transfuse into their minds the great ideas with which his own was impressed. He would accustom them by rule and instance to an accurate literal exposition of Scripture, and still more to that wonderful system of mystical interpretation, which the spiritual mind spontaneously suggests, and, when duly instructed in it, carries through the whole of Scripture. And in both he would aid them by the study of the works of the earlier fathers, and of the living lights of the Church, the great masters of dogmatical and interpretative Theology, St. Augustine and St. Jerome. Nay, it will appear that he perpetuated his teaching by composing works, probably for their benefit. In consequence Whithern became a school from which the teachers of the northern Church were sent out.

Another very important part of his institution was a school for the young, rising up, as in some of our Sees, under the shadow of the Cathedral, as in olden times it formed an essential part of the Capitular establishment. It was most important to rescue, as far as might be, the children of heathen or evil-minded parents from the contaminating influence of their homes, and both with them and others to keep the young mind from losing the innocency of its regeneration, and to train it in habits of virtue, and the knowledge of the truth. It was indeed sowing seeds, which might for a long time seem buried, but would at last grow up to noble trees. And from among the breth-

ren, as in after times, there would be found those who teach the little ones, and themselves be both refreshed and improved by it. Refreshed by the sweetness and simplicity of their innocent minds, naturally thinking no evil, without anxiety, ambition, or guile ; which is to the harassed mind what a garden of flowers is to the weary, where they may repose amid fair objects, and where all is peace. Improved, because their own ideas would be cleared, and made more real by having to impart their knowledge to the unsophisticated minds of children. Nor was the Bishop without his own share in the work. He taught the children himself, not unmindful of the precept to feed the lambs, just as Gerson, the great Chancellor of Paris, is said through life to have maintained the practice of weekly catechising little children. It was a mark of the sweetness of St. Ninian's character that he was loved and revered by his little ones ; and this circumstance was so prominent among his works that the characteristic which one historian gives him is, that he was a distinguished trainer of children.

Connected with this, there was a story for which people could, in St. Aelred's time, point to what were held to be living evidences, which brings out the Bishop as the father of these little ones. But it is best to adopt or paraphrase the words of St. Aelred. "Many, both of the more noble and the middle rank, placed their children under the care of the Saint, to be taught the knowledge of religion. These he instructed with learning, and formed to habits of virtue, restraining by wholesome discipline the faults to which their age is liable, and implanting virtues by which they might live in sobriety, justice, and piety." It happened on a time that one of the boys offended,

and preparations were made to punish him. The boy, in alarm, ran away ; but knowing the power and goodness of the Saint, and thinking he should find a solace in his flight if he did but take with him anything belonging to the good Bishop, he took off the staff on which St. Ninian used to support himself. In his eagerness to escape he looked out for a boat which might carry him away. The boats of the country St. Aelred then describes. They were of wicker work, large enough to hold three men ; over this wicker work a hide was stretched, and the boat would float and be impervious to the waves. They are the same boats which Pliny and Cæsar describe, and in which the Britons would cross the sea to France or Ireland, or even go voyages of many days. They are called currachs or coracles ; they were long in use in the Western Isles, and still are among the fishermen on the Wye.

There happened just then to be many large ones making ready on the shore. The wicker work was finished, but the hides not put on. He very incautiously got in, and the light boat at first kept on the top of the waves, the water not at once making its way through ; soon however it did so, and there seemed no prospect but that it must fill and go down. He knew not whether to run the risk of leaping out or staying and sinking. In the moment of his distress, however, he thought of the holiness and power of St. Ninian ; contrite for his fault, as though weeping at his feet, he confesses his guilt, entreats pardon, and by the most holy merit of the Saint begs the aid of Heaven. Trusting, with childlike simplicity, that the staff was not without its virtue, as belonging to the Saint, he fixed it in one of the openings. The water

retreated, and, as if in fear, presumed not to pour in." "These," says the saintly Aelred, "these are the works of Christ, Who did say to His disciples, he that believeth in Me the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater things than these shall he do."

A gentle wind arose and forced on the little boat, the staff supplied the place of sail, and rudder, and anchor to stay his course. The people crowding on the shore saw the little ship, like some bird swimming along the waves, without either oar or sail. The boy comes to shore, and to spread more widely the fame of the holy Bishop, he in strong faith, fixed the staff in the ground, and prayed that as a testimony to the miracle, it might take root, send forth branches, flowers, and fruit. Presently the dry wood shot out roots, was clothed with fresh bark, produced leaves and branches, and grew into a considerable tree. Nay, to add miracle to miracle, at the root of a tree a spring of the clearest water burst forth, and poured out a glassy stream, which wound its way with gentle murmurs, grateful to the eye, and, from the merits of the Saint, useful and health-giving to the sick.

With what interest would this tale be told to the pilgrim strangers, and the tree and fountain shewn as the evidences of its truth in those days of simple faith ! And with hearts lifted up to God, and trusting in the aid of St. Ninian's prayers, many a poor sick man would drink of the clear stream.

Men of this day may smile at their simplicity ; but better surely is the mind which receives as no incredible thing, the unusual interposition of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will ; better the spirit which views the properties of a salubrious spring as the gift of God, granted to a faith-

ful and holy servant, than that which would habitually exclude the thought of the Great Doer of all, by resting on the Laws of Nature as something independent of Him, not, as they are, the way in which He usually works ; or thanklessly, and as a matter of course receive the benefit of some mineral waters.

However, we were speaking of St. Ninian's school, and we have seen the aged Bishop, for the event is related near the close of his life, leaning on his staff, and ordering the boys to be punished ; and we see too what kind of scholars he had, and how deep was their veneration for him, even when they were doing wrong ; how simple their faith in the presence and power of the Almighty.

Another narrative brings more before us the personal habits and religious life of St. Ninian, and this we should much wish to know. We have followed him through his holy childhood, and his pure and humble youth, have seen in opening manhood his deep and reverend love of Divine knowledge—his relinquishing the world—his progress in piety and perception of the Truth. And one characteristic which had been formed and strengthened by his obedient love of Him, who is unseen, was now brought out, the fixedness of his thoughts amid the distractions of the world, and his attention to Divine things. This indeed is the state in which reason shows us we ought to be ; for it is to have our thoughts dwelling on what is true, permanent, and most concerning, instead of what is transient and unreal. And to him its effects were most blessed, enabling him to sustain a calm and tranquil mind amid the hurry and trials of his toilsome work ; leading an angel's life, diligent and laborious, and doing all things perfectly, as the angels unceasingly minister

for us ; but without excitement and hurry, even as they, by retaining the contemplation of the Divine glory, and a simple union with the Divine will, are undisturbed. It had doubtless ever been his practice from the time that as a child he turned his thoughts and loving affections towards his Heavenly Father, and afterwards dwelt in pious meditation on the truths he laboured so earnestly to learn. And he sustained it by keeping a constant guard against wandering, dissipated thoughts ; by occupying his mind in holy things, that the house which had been swept and garnished, might yet never be found empty ; by not seeking to know anything which did not concern him. He was assisted by a practice which we often read of in the lives of Saints, that of reading or saying the Psalms, or earnest meditation, at times when circumstances would most tend to dissipate the thoughts ; which probably every one feels to be the case in those seemingly unoccupied times, when one has to walk or travel alone. Then it is for most people, perhaps, impossible to keep the thoughts fixed without some external help, the very moving and changes that occur distract and unsettle them. To guard against this and another evil, that of idle and vain conversation, St. Ninian, on his journeys, always carried his Psalter and some book for religious reading ; and, besides saying the Psalms, when he stopped to rest, or to refresh his horse, (for he used to ride on his long travels through the rough woods and hills of his diocese,) he would take out his book and read with careful attention.

And to secure himself from any unnecessary occasions of distraction, he seems to have observed the rules which our good Bishop Wilson gave himself, and so has most forcibly given us. “ Never be curious to



know what is passing in the world, any further than duty obliges you ; it will only distract the mind when it should be better employed." "The best way to prevent wandering in prayer is not to let the mind wander too much at other times, but to have God always in our minds in the whole course of our lives."

We may here quote the beautiful language of St. Aelred. It was intended as a lesson for lay people, living at home, as well as for professedly religious men. It was to be read in the long winter evenings in the hall, as well as in the refectory. It has been read in many a house and many a monastery, in the olden times of merry England ; it may have awakened then a sense of the importance of guarded thoughts, and the danger of curiosity. It may do so for some one now.

"When I think," says the good Abbot, "of the very religious habits of this most holy man, I am filled with shame at the slothfulness of this our miserable generation. Which of us, I ask, even at home among the members of his own family, does not in social intercourse and conversation, introduce more frequently jocose than serious subjects, idle rather than useful, carnal than spiritual ones. Those lips which Divine grace has consecrated to praise the Lord, or to celebrate the holy mysteries, are daily polluted by detraction and worldly talk, and whilst they feel a distaste for the Psalms, the Gospels, and the Prophets, they run the live-long day through the vain and shameful works of men. And when they travel, is not the mind like the body, in continual wandering, the tongue in idleness to any good ? Reports of the characters of ungodly men are continually brought forward ; the gravity suited to a religious man is destroyed by laughing and stories ; the affairs of Kings, the duties of Bishops,

the ministrations of the Clergy, the contentions of the powerful, above all, the life and character of every one is the subject of discussion. We judge every thing except our own judgment ; and what is more to be grieved at, we bite and devour one another, so that we are consumed one of another. Not so the blessed Ninian ; crowds hindered not his tranquillity, nor did travelling interfere with his meditations, nor his devotions become lukewarm through lassitude. Wherever he was journeying he raised his mind to heavenly objects in prayer or contemplation, and when he turned aside on his journey, to rest himself or his horse, he delighted to take out a little book, which he always carried for the purpose, and read, or said Psalms, for he felt what the Prophet David says, “How sweet are Thy words unto my throat, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth.”

Nay it was said so highly favoured was his practice, that by special grace the very rain was turned aside from falling on him, forming as it were a vault above and around him. And once it happened, to give the substance of St. Aelred's narrative, that he and his brother, called Plebeia, a man of equal holiness, were on a journey, and as was their wont, so-laced themselves with the Songs of David. When they had travelled some distance they turned from the public road to rest themselves awhile, opened their Psalters, and were refreshing their souls with religious reading. Presently, the bright clear sky was clouded over, and the rain fell heavily ; the thin air, however, like an arched vault, formed over the servants of God, and continued as an impenetrable wall against the falling waters. Whilst, however, they were saying their Psalms, St. Ninian turned his eyes

from the book, an unlawful thought, nay, an unrestrained desire, affected his mind. The supernatural protection was withdrawn, and the rain fell on him. No useless lesson this—that the unseen guardianship which is over us in prayer, which screens us from evil, that the grace which is then around us, is for the time withdrawn, if wilful distractions are admitted. His brother observed the change, and understood the cause ; he gently reminded him of his fault, and the Saint, coming to himself, blushed at having been carried away by foolish thoughts, and in the same instant he threw off the imagination, and the rain was stayed.

It is to be hoped the reader will rather seize the lesson this ancient tale affords, than smile at its simplicity. Who can say how many a wandering thought has been checked by thinking of it, when the brethren of Whithern, day by day, and year after year, said their Psalter in St. Ninian's Church—checked by recalling the lesson which it teaches ; of evil kept off from the soul by earnest attention, and falling unrestrained upon it when we wilfully wander.

The next miracles are connected with the trials of St. Ninian. His portion, as that of all the saints, was to follow in his Master's steps, to labour for the unthankful, to win souls by suffering, to endure reproach, to bless those that cursed him. There are intimations incidentally occurring in the latter part of his life, which shew that he was often in danger from powerful men, and exposed even to the loss of life.

The chief opposer of his labours was a king of those parts, called Tudual ; the prince, perhaps, of the whole tribe of the Novantes. He was, for a Galwegian chieftain, wealthy, powerful, and influential, but withal

proud, grasping, and the slave of passion and unbridled license and ambition. It may easily be conceived that he felt the opposition which existed between his own spirit and St. Ninian's, and instinctively resisted him. He felt that he belonged to a kingdom which must fall before that, of which the Bishop was a minister, and strove the more earnestly because his time was short. The admonitions of the holy preacher were disregarded, his lessons of righteousness, temperance, and judgment were derided ; his teaching, nay his holy life, were assailed and detracted from ; all the influence the prince possessed was exercised to withstand him, and his doctrine was met with open and direct opposition. For a time the enemy summoned so much strength, and exercised so wide and baneful an influence, that it seems as if the conversion of the people was becoming hopeless. It was as a land on which the gentle dew and rain from heaven fell in vain ; it brought forth no fruit, but only thorns and thistles, and seemed nigh to be given up as accursed and reprobate.

But the prayers and patient sufferings of the Holy Brotherhood at Whithern, went up for a memorial ; they wielded the weapons of the Saints, meekness, righteousness, and truth ; and their intercessions for their persecutors and defamers prevailed. When their cause seemed hopeless, the Divine arm was lifted up to help them. He who took the lead in resisting them, the resolute persecutor and opposer of the truth, felt a hand laid on him to stay his course. Tudual was seized by a violent illness, which ended in the loss of sight. Laid on a bed of suffering, and precluded from the sight of the outward world, reflection brought him to himself. His conscience recalled the marked events of his soul's history, and his opposition to St.

Ninian would be the most prominent. The possibility of all proving true which he had often scoffed at ; the consciousness of his wrong doings, even according to his own ideas of wrong ; the undefined dread of future retribution, all would combine to awaken consideration. Then the purity of the Christians' lives—their present peace—their future hopes—would suggest the thought how much better it were to be as one of them ; nay, that there was something in them more than human ; the miracles scoffed at before would recur to his memory, and the truth of the Saint's claims take possession of his mind. So it was ; a light spread through the soul, whilst the outward organs were in darkness. Repentance and confession of his wrong doings followed, and without delay he called for his friends, took their advice, and sent them with expressions of contrition and humiliation to St. Ninian. He besought him not to treat him as he knew he deserved, but to imitate the mercifulness of his Lord, to return good for evil, love for hatred.

We may imagine the deep joy which the holy Bishop felt at the return of one who seemed lost for ever. In his mind there was no place for glorying over a fallen enemy, no notion of personal triumph, no revengeful delay of reconciliation, but a going out to meet him whom he saw afar off. He offered up first a prayer to God, a prayer of thankfulness for this work of His grace, a prayer that his enemy might be freed from his sufferings, and at once set out with the utmost humility and devotion. At first he gently reproved him for his sin, then with healing hand touched his head, and impressed upon his eyes the sign of our salvation. At once the pain was gone and the blindness departed. Tudual became a sincere convert, humility and purity took the

place of his former vices, and he devoted himself to St. Ninian's guidance, treating him with the deepest reverence, as recognizing that God was indeed with him and guided him in all his ways. The effect of this miracle of Divine grace in the conversion, even more than in the cure of the strenuous persecutor must have been very great. The power and influence which had been used to oppose, would now be devoted to aid the cause of religion, and so exercised, would indeed produce their true and proper results. To this time, probably, we may assign the general conversion of the people.

It was, perhaps, during the period of the previous persecution that the event occurred which St. Aelred next narrates. It was important as removing a scandal which might have stood greatly in the way of the progress of religion. It seems that clergy were fixed, whether before St. Ninian's arrival, or by him, in separate districts, which St. Aelred, in the language which would be most intelligible to his readers, designates as parishes. An unhappy girl who had been seduced by a powerful master, at his instigation, accused the clergyman of being the father of her child. The effect was astounding. The good were distressed ; the weak offended ; the wicked rejoiced ; and the low-minded ridiculed ; the whole sacred order was blasphemed by the ungodly. St. Ninian, however, was inwardly assured of the innocence of the priest ; and in full trust took the most public means of manifesting it. He proceeded to the Church, summoned the clergy and whole body of the people, preached and then confirmed. The mother appeared with her child and openly denounced the priest ; the utmost excitement prevailed ; shame and derision were the portion of the good ; when St. Ninian called on the child just born

to declare his father ; a voice was given to the infant and the truth declared.

One other miracle is recorded, which, like the one of the school boy, was associated with a permanent record in the name of the place, and a mark in a stone which, in St. Aelred's days, was shown in Galloway. But now we know nothing of the stone, and Pinkerton says, there is no place which he knows of the name. The miracle itself is, in some points, like one narrated by the Ecclesiastical historian, Sozomen, of St. Spiridion, a shepherd Bishop in Cyprus, who continued his simple employment in the care of flocks, after he was chosen to be a shepherd of souls. Of course there is no reason why the miracle should not have been performed by both saints. And if there be reason to think that the Almighty did exercise miraculous powers through His Saints, and that around them and in them there was a spiritual agency at work, let us be cautious how we judge these tales, let us tread carefully on what may be hallowed ground.

The story is this. St. Ninian and his brethren had many flocks and herds, which they kept for their own use ; for milk and cheese would be monks' fare ; and for hospitality to strangers and the use of the poor ; making provision to fulfil the precept which Bishops and their chapters and all monasteries were used to keep in mind, to exercise hospitality without grudging. These cattle were kept in pasture grounds, at some distance from the monastery, and St. Ninian went to bless the herds and their keepers. The Bishop had them all brought together, lifted up his hands, and committed himself and all that was his to the guardianship of God. He then went round them, and with his staff marked the ground within the limits

of which they were to stay, something like what was afterwards done as a superstitious spell. He then retired to the house of an honourable matron where he and his brethren were to lodge. After refreshing themselves with food, and their souls with the word of God, they retired to rest. Meanwhile robbers arrive, and seeing the herds unenclosed and unguarded, expect an easy prey. The cattle remain quiet, no sound is heard, no dog even is heard to bark ; they enter within the limits, but do it to their cost. The bull of the herd attacks and severely gores the ringleader of the thieves, and himself, digging his hoof violently into the ground, impresses the mark of it on the rock, as if in wax. The mark remained, and the place was called in Saxon, Farres Last, that is, the Bull's foot-mark, Tauri Vestigium, as the Latin life explains it. Meanwhile after his regular morning prayers, St. Ninian arrives, finds the poor robber with his entrails torn out, and now lifeless, and the others running about as if insane, within the limit he had marked around the cattle. He was deeply moved with pity, and entreated that the robber might be restored to life ; nor did he cease from prayers and tears till the same Power which had caused his death restored him again to life. The other robbers who seemed possessed on seeing St. Ninian, fell at his feet in fear and trembling, and begged forgiveness. He kindly reproved them, pointed out the punishment which awaited the robber, and at last, after giving them his blessing, allowed them to depart. The result was the sincere conversion of the man whose life had been restored.

Perhaps the strangeness of this narrative ought not to be any hinderance to our believing it. As the most wonderful instance of his prayers being heard, even to



bringing the dead to life, its circumstances are especially dwelt on in the religious services for his day. And we are sure the people of Galloway would have been disappointed, if they had not found this story in the Life of their own Sainted Bishop ; for like the tree and the spring, Farres Last must have made an early and deep impression on their minds ; and often doubtless was the story told to the stranger who passed that way, and to their own little ones, and they would go to see the deep impression of the bull's foot ; and the sermon which St. Ninian had preached would be afresh inculcated, and the fact appealed to as the most vivid evidence of the wrongness and the possible unexpected evil which might at any time await the cattle stealer.

We may now pass on to St. Ninian's conversion of the Southern Picts, of whom he is designated the Apostle.

---

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Conversion of the Picts.*

THE labours of St. Ninian extended over a wide district ; and were exercised among great troubles and dangers, from the unsettled state of the country, and the continual hostilities which prevailed. The tract of country, which, so far as we know, had no Pastor but himself, stretched from sea to sea, and, besides the (now) English portion of it, from the wall of Antoninus to that of Severus. The Western part, however, was his special care. The rest was a scene of war and rapine during the chief part of his Episcopate ; and

after fruitless endeavours to repel the inroads of the mountaineers, the Roman forces were at length withdrawn A. D. 410, and the Provincials left to defend themselves as best they could.

The tribes of St. Ninian's diocese had retained their original divisions of clans, and though they were rendered less fit to cope with the unsubdued and uncivilized portions of the same great Celtic race, whom we know as Picts, they yet combined, and maintained themselves as a distinct people in possession of their territory. The Picts might rob, but do not seem to have displaced them. The separate princes united in the election of a common leader, and though harassed by internal broils and breaches of their federal compact, the Western tribes, with the exception of Galloway, continued for six centuries as an independent body, forming the British kingdom of Strathclydd. During all the wars which rent this unhappy district, Britons, Picts, and Scots, it is said, united in reverencing St. Ninian. He was allowed to travel, without molestation, through countries which were the seat of war. His calm presence seemed to breathe of peace and love, and to inspire awe even in the wildest barbarians. It has been so in these latter times. The Isle of Man was to be spared by the French, for the sake of Bishop Wilson, and in the wars of the Low Countries at the beginning of the last century, the Archbishop of Cambray was treated with reverence by all the contending parties, and made his Episcopal journeys unmolested in the midst of hostilities.

Who can say that it was not owing to the influence of the holy truths, and the practical goodness inculcated by St. Ninian, that the tribes of his diocese did

so unite and retain a social life after the convulsions which resulted from the departure of the Romans ?

And now, after many years of patient toil and assiduous teaching, having brought the people, immediately committed to him, to some unity of faith and goodness of life ; his ardent desire for the salvation of men prompted him to undertake the conversion of a tribe, who did not as yet know the name of Christ, and were bitterly hostile to his own countrymen. These were the Southern Picts, a division of the numerous tribes, who, secured by the mountains of the Highlands, had never submitted to the yoke of the Romans, and now in the decline of their power revenged themselves on them, and on the tribes of their own island, who had yielded and been civilized by them.

It seems that Caledonians and Picts are but different names for the same people, given originally to one tribe or other, according to the circumstances of their localities or ways of life, and then borne by all in common. As inhabitants of the forests of the Lowlands they had early had the name of Woodmen, Caledones, given them. Another portion again who occupied the plain country between the Grampians and the sea, to the north of the Frith of Forth, were called Peithi, a name which signifies inhabitants of the open country, and by the Romans, Picti, (as the Welsh *peithen* is from the Latin *pecten*, and *effaith* is from *effectus*,) and from them the whole race received the name. It was the coincidence between their own Celtic name, and their painted bodies, which gave a point to the well known line of Claudian, "*non falso nomine Picti*," which would have had little force, if they were only called so, because of their being painted. These

inhabitants of the plain country are the Southern Picts. Those who remained in the fastnesses were called Northern Picts, and the distinction of these two portions of the race would become more marked, from the different habits of life, which would gradually result from their different localities. The distinction was recognized in the middle of the fourth century, when they were respectively called by the Romans, Deucaledones, and Vecturiones ; of which the former, it is said, means separate or far Caledonians, those, that is, farther removed from the Roman districts ; and Vecturiones is another Celtic form of Picts, P and V being interchanged, and the rest of the word, Peithwyr, or Peithwyron, differing from simple Picts, as Englishmen does from English.

These Vecturiones—they to whom the name of Pict first belonged, are the tribe of which St. Ninian was the Apostle. They had first established themselves on the Eastern coast, as has been said, north of the Frith of Forth and of the Roman wall ; and many authors confine them to this district. Others say that after the withdrawal of the Roman forces they passed the wall, poured in upon the Eastern coast of Valentia, and took up a position which they permanently occupied, south of the Forth, in the Lothians, and even reaching to Northumberland ; they had previously acquired more settled habits than the mountaineers, and so were fitted to establish themselves permanently in the countries they subdued. They existed as a separate people in the time of Bede, who accurately distinguishes them from those who lived within the mountain district. It was, he says, when St. Columba went to convert the Northern Picts, that he found

the Southern ones had been converted previously, and, as they stated, by St. Ninian.

It seems most probable that it was after their occupation of the country south of the Forth, (supposing they did occupy it,) that he went amongst them. It was that occupation which gave them a more distinct and permanent nationality ; nor is it to be supposed, that they should have become Christians, and afterwards have attacked with so much cruelty the people to whom they were indebted for the knowledge of the Gospel ; we will not think so ill of them, barbarians as they were. And the dates would lead to the same conclusion. The Romans retired in 410. Ninian had then been thirteen years in Galloway. He lived for twenty-two years longer. The first thirteen years would not be more than enough for the work he had to effect among his own people. The last twenty-two allow space for the Picts to have come down and occupied the Eastern portion of Valentia, and to have been visited and converted by St. Ninian.

They had overrun and seized on a part, the farthest from his Church, of that wide field which had been committed to his care. He was not then going beyond his measure in endeavouring to win them over. It is an early and a beautiful instance of the power of the Church to reduce under her saving sway, and by the armour of truth, meekness, and righteousness, those whom carnal weapons had in vain opposed—to lead captive the conqueror.

“It deeply grieved the Holy Bishop,” St. Aelred proceeds, “that Satan, when he had now been driven from the rest of the world, had found a place in the hearts of the Picts, in a corner of the island, near the ocean. He girt himself accordingly as an energetic

athlete to put down his tyranny, taking to himself the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breast-plate of love, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." As associates in his labours, as comforters, and advisers, after the example of St. Paul, he took with him a body of holy brothers, those of his Clergy and religious society, who were most suited for the work. Happily they had not to overcome the hinderance of a different language, for though the dialects of the various portions of the Celtic race were distinguished, there still remained a sufficient similarity to allow of their being mutually understood, even after a much longer and greater separation than had yet taken place ; as it is said the people of Brittany and the Welch now understand each other. They had however great difficulties to struggle against, in the antipathy which the free Celts entertained for those who had been under the Roman sway—an antipathy stronger than is felt towards people of quite a different race ; and again, from the circumstance that they were themselves the aggressors, who had seized on the territories of the Southern tribes. Still there was something calculated to melt their savage hearts in the presence of one among them so different from any they had known before, preaching the doctrines of purity, humility, and forgiveness ; whose graces, notwithstanding, would be recognized and loved by all in whom there was a principle of good. He was one of the people they had attacked, cruelly treated, and displaced, and he was amongst them, not with the tone of complaint upbraiding, or revenge, but meek and gentle, possessing a sweetness of temper, and a calm and cheerful mind, which he pointed out to them the means of attaining.

Their religion was the same as that of the other tribes of the island had formerly been, though one would suppose, in a more rude state of superstition than the richer portion of the people, among whom the Druids were so superior a caste. St. Ninian called them to forsake their idolatry and superstition, and to turn to that Almighty in Whom, though unknown, they yet believed; to Him, Who gave them rain from heaven, filling their hearts with food and gladness. He called them from the conscious misery of their present state—from the bondage of vices which galled their very soul, to an obedience and submission, which at once brought relief. He told them of permanent existence, and a future responsibility, of which a voice within testified the truth; and he professed himself the minister of a gracious dispensation, which would secure those who embraced it in a future dreadful day. This preaching would carry conviction with it to those prepared souls which are found amongst the uncivilized barbarians, as well as among simple rustics or refined philosophers. Wherever man is, there are hearts and consciences which will correspond to the simple doctrines of religion, and be conscious on hearing it of the truth that one thing is needful. But his words, it is said, were not unaccompanied by convincing signs that he was indeed what he professed, a messenger from that great unseen Being in whom they believed. He performed miracles among them. “The blind see,” St. Aelred says, “the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the possessed are set free from the demons that afflict them.” Thus does he apply the description of our Saviour’s works to those of His servant. “He that believeth on me the works that I

do, shall he do also, and greater things than these shall he do, because I go to the Father."

Perhaps had the evidence for these miracles been asked, the conversion of the people would have been appealed to as a sufficient proof—the effect most distinctly establishing the cause. And had the converts been asked the grounds on which they believed, an appeal to the miracles would probably have been their answer. Indeed, those who profess themselves ready to admit the probability of miracles, where there is an apparently adequate cause for them, must allow it in the case of the Gospel being preached to a barbarous people ; since the tangible and obvious evidence of a miracle is best calculated to affect them strongly, and to gain an attention for the preacher, which it would require a long life amongst them, and a long manifestation of the living miracle of a saintly character to obtain.

St. Ninian, it is said, first converted the king of the tribe, whose influence was exerted to further the general acceptance of the Gospel among his people. Such was at this period the usual course of conversion. In the earlier ages, individuals were gained over here and there, unknown to the world, and generally of humble rank, and from them the holy influence spread to relations and neighbours, and those who had the opportunity of seeing what the Gospel had wrought in them ; and so the leaven was diffused through the whole mass, and at last affected the rulers of the world. Afterwards the course was generally the reverse. Kings were converted, and brought their subjects over to the profession of Christianity. The early ages gained men by their own individual persuasion, and the work was slow. In the latter



period it was more rapid ; and if the converts were now more influenced by earthly motives, their posterity at any rate reaped abundant blessings from being brought into the fold of Christ. Perhaps this change is indicated, when after the lame and blind had not filled the feast, it is said that the last messengers were to compel men to come in.

It is but reasonable to suppose that St. Ninian's preaching was extended to those of the Southern Picts, who still continued in their earlier settlement north of the Frith of Forth. Indeed as has been said, many writers confine the settlement of this race to the northern districts, and do not suppose them to have had any permanent settlement south of the Roman Wall. The question however, is not of any importance in its bearing on a history of St. Ninian. Some again have confounded the southern Picts with the British inhabitants of Valentia. Others, with the race called Picts, who came from Ireland, and occupied Galloway in the ninth century, and who alone bore the name in the later period, when the proper Picts were lost among the other nations who occupied Scotland. St. Ninian was ever known as the Apostle of the Southern Picts, and as his proper mission was to the inhabitants of Galloway and Valentia generally, it was not unnatural to imagine these tribes to be those who are meant by the Southern Picts. They were however clearly a distinct tribe ; and it is a confirmation of the truth of St. Aelred's history that he does so distinguish them, as Bede had also done, and as the Collect for St. Ninian's day, in the Aberdeen Breviary, "*Deus, qui populos Pictorum et Britonum per doctrinam Sancti Niniani Episcopi et Confessoris docuisti.*"

It was not however enough to gain the people to a profession of the Gospel ; St. Ninian also provided for the permanent maintenance of the Church, by the consecration of Bishops, and regular establishment of Clergy. His biographer says, “he ordained Priests, consecrated Bishops, arranged the ecclesiastical Orders, and divided the whole country into parishes.” The last is noticed as an anachronism, as the system of parochial division did not generally arise till a much later period. It may however very probably mean nothing more than the division of the country, so that the Priests might each have his own definite sphere of labour ; which was very necessary in so wide and thinly peopled a district. In the consecration of Bishops we do not know whether St. Ninian acted alone, as was allowed in cases of necessity ; and would be the more so here, as he was not apparently included in any province, of which the other Bishops might assist in the consecration ; or whether some of the British Bishops joined in the sacred rite. They might still be remaining in their Sees, but were far removed from this country, and the hostilities and dangers which prevailed might hinder them from coming.

We are equally in ignorance as to the succession of the Bishopricks ; of which we know no more than of those of the ancient Britons. It was very possible that they might have been numerous, as those of Ireland were. Of the portion North of the Forth, Abernethy was the Bishoprick, and so continued till later times, the Bishop, or as he was sometimes styled, Archbishop of that See, being called the Bishop of the Picts. In all probability St. Ninian would leave some of his own clergy, as the Priests and Bishops of his new converts. They could not themselves so

soon have persons who could be entrusted with the sacred office of preserving the deposit of the truth, and St. Ninian, from his own experience, would be conscious of the value of a long and careful preparation for the sacred ministry. Nor is there any reason why we should not suppose that he revisited the Picts, and from time to time supplied what was wanting for the completeness of their ecclesiastical system. St. Aelred, indeed, speaks as if all had been done in one visit, but he might naturally adopt such a summary mode of narration when he was without any distinct information of the particulars of the visits. He passes on at the conclusion to the tranquillity which characterized the latter days of the Saint. "When he had confirmed the sons whom he had begotten in Christ in faith and good works, and arranged all which seemed necessary for the honour of God and the salvation of souls, the Saint bade farewell to his brethren, and returned to his own Church, where he spent the rest of his life, perfect in holiness, and glorious by his miracles, in great peace and tranquillity of mind."

By the Picts his name was remembered, and the Church he formed among them preserved. It was above a century after when St. Columba came amongst them, and they then professed Christianity, and mentioned St. Ninian as the Bishop by whom they had been converted.

## CHAPTER IX.

*St. Ninian's latter Days.*

AND now that we have followed the Saint through the broken incidents of a holy and laborious life, there are few remaining points on which to dwell, but such as they are, they will be interesting to recount.

And first, of the personal habits of St. Ninian. Holy and spotless as he had been through life, it would seem as if he might have been free from penitential austerities, and have spared the hardihoods which others must use with themselves. But such views proceed on erroneous notions, since they contradict the practice of the most eminent saints. The most pure and holy have ever been the most severe in their mortifications. Holy men, such as he was, become, as it would seem, not only indifferent to worldly comforts, but lovers of suffering endured for Christ's sake, and that principally from the love of Him. It seems to them, so to say, unnatural to live at ease, when He endured so much on their account. And they may suffer in a way which corresponds to His sufferings, by suffering for their people, by accompanying their earnest intercessions with those acts of mortification which are natural in deep sorrow. There is ever before them the sight of some, lost to their true interests, passing day by day from a life of folly and forgetfulness into an unchanging state; and yearning for their recovery and salvation, yet unable to effect it, when their words seem to them as idle tales, to weep, to fast, to pray, to endeavour to prevail with God for them is

their natural resource. Then again, in a deep humble sense of not having corresponded to the influence of Divine Grace ; the consciousness that though they have not wilfully and obstinately continued in sin, yet they have not improved duly the spiritual privileges afforded to them ; the knowledge of imperfection and tendencies to sin—all these are so clearly seen, and acutely felt by those who really love God, that the sorrows and afflictions of saints are ever penitential. Let us not then be surprised, if, when we draw near St. Ninian, and learn his secret ways, we do not find contrivances for comfort, or the enjoyment of life.

They show on the coast of Galloway, on the face of a lofty and precipitous line of rocks, against which one of the stormiest of our seas incessantly beats, a damp chilly cave, lying one third of the way, it may be, from the bottom of the cliff, and accessible only by climbing and springing from rock to rock. It is a deep recess, running back some twenty feet, and gradually narrowing from the mouth, where it may be twelve feet high, and as many wide. There is nothing to screen it from the winds and spray which beat against the rock, no bottom of earth to rest upon, but only bare uneven stone. Here, the tradition of the country says, St. Ninian used to come for penitential and devotional retirement ; and it is not improbable. For a religious person in those days, to retire to a cave, nay, to live in one all his life, was no strange thing ; it was but to follow in the steps of the confessors of the earlier dispensation, who lived in dens and caves of the earth. It was the ordinary practice of good people thus to deprive themselves of every earthly comfort, and to realize the time when they should be completely stripped of all which this

world can afford, in the cold and silent tomb. To practise as it were beforehand, what every one at some time must actually undergo, silence, and loneliness, and reflection ; without any thing of this world to occupy the thoughts, or to afford outward comfort. St. Ciaran, the Apostle of the Scoto Irish, had a cave in Kintire ; and near St. Andrew's, the place of of St. Rule's retirement, there are many caves which were the retreats of religious men ; and he whom St. Ninian specially revered, the Saint of Tours, as we have seen, lived with his associates in caves. It has been thought that they were places of concealment, to which a holy man might retreat from the persecution his preaching would excite ; and there was need St. Ninian should have such a protection, for he was not unfrequently in danger from the attacks of the obstinate and the unbelieving. One would rather, however, view them as places for religious retirement, and imagine the holy Ninian going aside to rest awhile, from the many who were coming and going, to withdraw at seasons from the hurry and distraction of his office, to consider his own state, to examine his spiritual progress, to mourn over what was evil, to deprecate the Divine displeasure, and to intercede for his people ; and surely it seems more fitting to do so in a lone and cheerless spot, out of the reach of men, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, with the wild winds howling around, and the sea and the waves roaring, and sea-birds screaming, than surrounded by comforts, and the appliances of luxury. And if it is rather probable antecedently, that St. Ninian should have a place of retreat, and the practice of the times would lead him to choose a

cave ; we should most naturally believe it to be that, which popular tradition has pointed out.

Another instance of his mortified life, not it is presumed uncommon in the histories of saints, is the practice, as it has been reported, of abstaining from all food during the awful season of our blessed Redeemer's sufferings, in sympathy, penitence, and love. It is said he tasted nothing from the evening of Maundy Thursday, till he had partaken of the Holy Sacrament on Easter Day.

There is an old Life of St. Ninian in Ireland, referred to by Archbishop Usher, which reports further acts of self-denial, and withdrawal from all that winds itself around the heart, even the dearest ties of blood. It says that the mother and relations of the Saint were used to visit him, and that to separate himself from all intercourse with them, he went over to Ireland, accompanied by some of his disciples, and there, on a piece of ground given him by the king, founded the monastery of Cluayn Coner, where he spent the rest of his life and died. The account of his retreat is one of those stories which may illustrate character, and show what it was thought he would do ; but as a matter of fact, it has no authority, and as regards his death, is contrary to the best testimony, which represents him as having died, and been buried in his own Church, at Whithern.

We have one more point in which to view St. Ninian, and then we will take leave of him—that is, as an author ; in which character he appears in the ancient collections of our national writers, by Leland, Bale and Pits. It is by no means improbable, indeed most likely, that he should commit to writing what would be for the good of his clergy and scholars. He had

stored up at Rome the lessons of the great teachers of the Church ; he had doubtless studied the writings of others, and himself through life meditated on the Holy Scriptures. He was now but perpetuating for the benefit of others, the spontaneous outpourings of his mind, or the solutions of those difficulties which were proposed to him. Such is the character of the writings which are attributed to him—Commentaries on the Holy Scriptures, and in particular, Meditations on the Psalms. These were the Meditations which had been the solace of his travels on the wilds of Gallo-way, the fruits of a deeply contemplative spirit exercised on those sacred words, which, by their continual repetition, and adaptation to the varying circumstances of the Christian life, are associated with our holiest thoughts. The other work of which the title is handed down, was one composed, doubtless, as a Theological Manual for the Clergy and Students of Whithern.<sup>1</sup> It was a collection of Sentences from the Fathers, of passages expressing their sentiments on points of doctrine and morals ; most probably arranged under heads, and so forming a body of divinity, and giving the most important portions—the very essence of their writings. The value of such a work to St. Ninian's clergy can scarcely be over-rated. They could not afford a large library, and might have read much without obtaining the advantages which such a selection would afford. It might, we may imagine, have been St. Ninian's work at Rome, where he had leisure and

<sup>1</sup> “ Ex iis autem quæ post se reliquit, aliqua saltem nomine tenus tenemus teste sexto senensi,

Meditationum in Psalmos Davidis librum unum ;

De Sanctorum Sententiis librum unum.”

Pitseus de Illustribus Britannię Scriptoribus, p. 87.



free access to libraries, and where such a commonplace book would have proved a useful aid in his own studies, to enter the passages which he would most wish to preserve. For though the most voluminous of the Fathers, as we have them, were only sending out their works during his stay at Rome, there were many remains of older ones which we have lost. And he was now only making that which had been intended for his own reference and perusal, a benefit to others ; and very great was the use of such a selection, in instilling and preserving sound doctrine in the minds of those who were to teach others.

Such was St. Ninian, the young and noble Briton, who, for the love of Christ, and the true knowledge of Him, went forth from his country and his father's house. Such was he ; a laborious apostle, enduring toil, difficulty, and reproach, in bringing men to Christ ; a mortified ascetic, and meditative student ; a kind teacher of babes, a humble, gentle, and circumspect governor of a religious society. And great was the fruit of his labours, in the recovery and salvation of souls, great in the glory of which he himself was made a partaker.

His life had been continued till the year 432, that is above seventy years. During the last five-and-thirty, nearly half of the whole, he had laboured in the wild, barbarous, and unsettled country to which he had been appointed as a Missionary Bishop. Worldly honours, comforts, possessions, he had cast behind him. He lived for God, and to do His will. His peaceful days of study and meditation in the sacred city, he might look back upon as sweet and holy days, full of spiritual privileges, and the source of many a blessing ; but it

would be as one surrounded by the rich fruits of autumn, would look back on spring ; as very fair, and in its time seeming more pleasant, but chiefly valuable as instrumental towards the true good which he is now enjoying, though it may be, among many labours. But such labours, it has been beautifully said, are sweet—sweet as those of the husbandman, who rejoices in the heavier load of corn by the increased value of his possessions—sweet as to the gatherer of frankincense, by the delights elicited in his toils.

Advanced in years, surrounded by his spiritual children and friends, beholding the effect of his labours, the time is come for him to depart.—To adopt the words of St. Aelred, “To the blessed Saint himself that day was a day of joy and gladness ; to the people over whom he presided, one of tribulation and distress. He rejoiced, for heaven was opening to him. His people grieved at being deprived of such a Father. He rejoiced, for a crown of immortality was preparing for him. They were in sorrow, because their salvation seemed in danger. Nay, even the fulness of his joy was impaired by his love for them ; to leave them was a heavy trial, but to be longer separated from Christ, appeared beyond endurance.

“But while his soul was thus delaying, Christ consoles him, ‘Rise up,’ He said, ‘my beloved, my dove (in the English Version,<sup>1</sup> ‘my love, my fair one’), make haste, and come away.’ ‘Rise up, my beloved, rise up, my Dove.’ Rise up in thought, make haste by desire, come by affection. Suitable, indeed, were these words to this most blessed Saint, as one to whom, as the friend of the Bridegroom, that heavenly Bridegroom had com-

<sup>1</sup> Cant. ii. 10.

mitted his Bride, to whom He had revealed His secrets, and opened His treasures. Deservedly is that soul called beloved, in whom all is made up of love, and there is nothing of fear. 'My beloved,' He says, 'my dove.' My dove—a dove truly taught to mourn, that knew nothing of the gall of bitterness, but wept with those that wept, was weak with the weak, and burned for those that were offended. 'Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.'

"'For lo ! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.' Then, O blessed Saint, the winter was indeed past to thee, when, with happy eye, thou didst gain the sight of thy heavenly country—that country which the Sun of righteousness illumines by the brightness of His light, which love warms, and a wonderful equality, like the attempering of the spring-time, regulates by an ineffable unity. Then the unseasonable winter which fills all on earth with discomfort, which hardens the frozen hearts of men by vices that fall upon them, where neither truth shines, nor love burns to the full—this was past and gone, and thy holy soul, completely triumphant, escaped from the showers of temptations, and the hail-storms of persecutions, into the beauty of perpetual verdure.

"'The flowers,' he says, 'have appeared in our land. For around thee, O blessed Ninian, breathed the odours of the flowers of Paradise, when on thee, as on one most familiar to them, the multitudes of those that are clothed in crimson and white, smiled with placid countenance, and bid thee to their company—they whom chastity has clothed with white, and love with blushing crimson. For though no occasion was afforded thee to give the sign of bodily martyrdom, still that without which martyrdom is nothing, denied

not the merit of martyrdom. For so often as he offered himself to the swords of the perverse, so often as in the cause of righteousness he opposed himself to the arms of tyrants, he was prepared to fall in the cause of truth, and to die for righteousness. Deservedly then is he admitted among the flowers of the roses, and the lilies of the valley—himself clothed in crimson and white, going up from Lebanon to be crowned among the hosts of heaven.

“‘For the time of the vintage is come.’ For soon, as a full ripe cluster, he must be cut from the stem of the body, from the vineyard of the Church on earth, to be pressed by love, and laid up in the storehouses of heaven.

“Thus the blessed Ninian, perfect in life, mature in years happily departed from the world, and attended by angelic spirits, was borne to heaven ; and there associated with the company of the Apostles, mingling with the ranks of Martyrs, and united to the bands of holy Confessors, adorned with the Virgins’ flowers, he ceases not to succour those on earth who hope in him, call on him, and praise him.

“He was buried in the Church of St. Martin, which he had himself built from the foundation, and placed in a stone coffin near the altar, the Clergy and people standing by, and lifting up their heavenly hymns with heart and voice, with sighs and tears. And at this place the power which had shone forth in his life, ceases not in death to manifest itself around his body, so that all the faithful recognize him as living in heaven, because it is evident that he produces effects on earth. At his most sacred tomb, the sick are cured, the lepers are cleansed, the evil ones are affrighted, the blind receive their sight. And by all these things

the faith of believers is confirmed to the praise and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen."

The death of St. Ninian occurred on the 16th of September, A. D. 432; and on that day his memory was celebrated in the Scottish Church, in Catholic ages, with deep veneration, as their chiefest Saint, to whom first they owed it, that they had been brought from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. The service for the day in the Aberdeen Breviary is very beautiful, and in connexion with his history, most interesting. It contains nine Lessons, extracted from St. Aelred's life, and throws into devotional form the various events we have been recording. The circumstances of his life and miracles are expressed in hymns and proses, antiphones and responses, which once were chaunted in his praise throughout all the Churches of Scotland. His name and day were noted in the Kalendar prefixed to the Scottish Prayer Book of King Charles the First.

The rest of St. Aelred's work is occupied by a detailed account of miracles wrought at the tomb of St. Ninian, which it is not necessary now to narrate. "When the Saint had been taken up to heaven," he says, "the multitude of the faithful continued to visit, with the deepest devotion, what seemed to be left them of him—his most holy remains, and out of regard to their piety and faith, the Almighty showed, by the evidence of numerous miracles, that, though the common lot of mortality had taken His Saint from the earth, yet he still lived in heaven." A distorted child was first restored; this led many to hasten to bring their varied diseases before his holy relics; in particular, a man

covered with a cutaneous disease of a most horrible kind was restored ; then a girl, who had lost her sight ; and two lepers were made clean by bathing in his spring. "Through his prayers," to quote a hymn for his day, "the shipwrecked find a harbour, and the barren woman is blessed with offspring ;" and St. Aelred says that the power continued to be manifested even in his own times.

---

## CHAPTER X.

### *Conclusion.*

AND now, that we have followed St. Ninian through his laborious life to his peaceful rest, we may not unnaturally wish to know what became of his Church and people after he was taken from them. On this point however our information is very limited, and much is left to be inferred from probabilities.

He had introduced the Ritual and Observances of the Roman Church, which were certainly different from those which the Britons used. Of these however no traces can be discovered. It would seem as if they had been lost among the changes which occurred between his death and the time of Bede ; for, though that writer carefully sought for instances of conformity with Rome, he makes no mention of this, which would have been marked in itself, and known to the Saxons at Whithern. The Church of St. Ninian may herein have conformed to the practices of the other Britons, un-

der the Episcopate of St. Kentigern, or have quite sunk into obscurity.

We should naturally expect that the instructions he established, would, for a time at least, be maintained ; that the religious society would hold together, and continue its work, as a refuge of piety and teacher of religion ; and there is some confirmation of this expectation in the statement of Scottish historians, that St. Ninian's monastery was a school which supplied teachers for the people ; and that of Bede, that the body of the Saint, with those of many holy men rested in the Church of Whithern, as though there was there a home of Saints.

As regards the succession to his See, we are altogether without information. It is possible that in the troubled state of the country, when the Picts and Scots were so grievously afflicting the Britons, and when there certainly was so great a want of earnestness among the British Bishops, they may have neglected to supply a successor to St. Ninian ; and the monastery and country priests may have continued without a pastor, trusting to occasional missionary visits, such as those of Palladius and others. The Church he loved so well was now desolate, and a widow. This seems most probably to have been the case till the time of St. Kentigern, who fixed his See at Glasgow, and included in his diocese the district which had been St. Ninian's care, and it is said, completed the work of conversion. That diocese, as has been stated before, extended over the south-west of Scotland, and the Cumbrian Britons, as far as Stainmoor ; and Whithern, whether it retained its monastery or not, became subordinate.

Meanwhile the Saxons were occupying England ;

were themselves being converted ; and their power rapidly increasing, accompanied by a depth and earnestness of religion, perhaps unequalled in any people. From being the most barbarous, they became the most devout. The nation seemed a really Christian nation, and England was indeed an Isle of Saints. A spirit of piety was diffused through every class. Political measures were in consequence determined by the principles of the Gospel ; and Saxon conquests were Christian ones, subordinate to the great objects of extending the privileges of religion, and procuring everlasting good for those whom they subdued.

It was the lot of Galloway in the eighth century to be overcome, and partially occupied by them, as a portion of the kingdom of Bernicia ; and they too revered St. Ninian ; and in the place where he was resting, and where his miracles were recorded to have been wrought, they established a monastery, and introduced a new succession of Bishops, under the metropolitan See of York. Then it was that Bede wrote of St. Ninian, and Alcuin was in correspondence with the brethren of the monastery. This succession continued as long as the Saxons had possession of Galloway ; and the names of the Bishops are recorded from 723 to 790.

After this it was again broken ; for fresh incursions afflicted the unhappy country. They were now overrun, not by a people who introduced a pure religion and social improvement, but by hordes of Irish, called Cruithne, or Piets, which is said to be a word of the same meaning ; a distinct race, be it observed, from all who had previously borne that name. They were an uncivilized and very savage people, who brought their own religion and habits, and established them here.



They were long known as the wild Picts of Galloway, and continued as a distinct and notoriously barbarous people till after the time of St. Aelred ; indeed Gaelic continued to be spoken here till the time of Mary Stuart. These are the Picts of later times, from whom the Picts' wall is named. During the dreary period which followed their invasion, the Bishop of Man, the nearest See, took charge of the deserted flock. A work of love which may add some little to our interest in that lowly relic of the Celtie Church.

In the twelfth century however brighter days beamed on Galloway. The power of the Saxon race who ruled in Scotland increased, and the Lords of Galloway, with their country, became dependent on the sovereign, and enjoyed the dangerous distinction of being the first to make the onset in his battles. David I. was a devotedly religious prince ; the perfect example, as historians not disposed to flattery have called him, of a good king, whom St. Aelred loved and mourned over as though he were his father. His great object was to restore religion in Scotland, and with this view he founded Bishopricks and monasteries throughout his dominions, and St. Ninian's See was first restored.<sup>1</sup> But such was the fallen condition of the Scottish Church, that no Bishop was left to consecrate the newly appointed one. And by the direction of the Pope, Thurstan, the Archbishop of York, performed the office. The Bishop, Gilaldan, from the evidence of ancient custom, as he said, acknowledged the obedience of his See to York ; referring to the time of the Saxon succession in the eighth century. Gallo-

<sup>1</sup> If it had not been, it was earlier ; as some think, by Malcolm III., in the preceding century.

way thus again became part of the Province of York, which gives the English Church another claim on St. Ninian ; and so continued, certainly till the fourteenth century, and perhaps till the establishment of St. Andrew's as a metropolitan Church in the fifteenth. Thus was the Church again restored in Galloway, and continued to flourish till the change of religion in the sixteenth century ; her Bishop, out of regard to St. Ninian, and the antiquity of the See, taking the first place among the Scottish Bishops.

Soon after this new foundation of the Bishoprick, the Lord of Galloway, Fergus, followed up the work of his sovereign and friend, and imitated in Galloway the course he had taken in the rest of Scotland. He is spoken of by the historians of Galloway as in his sphere, one of the greatest benefactors of his country. He found his people wild, barbarous, and irreligious, and to effect a reformation among them, he established monasteries, as sources from which flowed forth the blessings of holy example and Christian teaching, and moral and social improvement, which in time took effect upon the people.

At Whithern he introduced a body of Præmonstratensian canons, an order then recently established, and full of life ; it was an offset from Saulseat, where he had previously brought a colony from Cockersand, in Lancashire. These formed the Chapter, (the Prior, during the vacancy of the See, being Vicar General) and elected the Bishop, though with occasional opposition from the secular Clergy. It was soon after the foundation of the Priory that St. Aelred wrote his *Life of St. Ninian*, and the chancel of the Church was built not long after ; the publication of the *Life* probably

making the virtues of St. Ninian known, and drawing numerous worshippers and offerings to his shrine.

From that time the Saint was held in the highest veneration, and his shrine visited, and his intercession sought by people from every part. Thousands of pilgrims came every year ; and a general protection, very necessary in those days of Border warfare, was granted by James the First, in 1425, to all strangers coming into Scotland to visit St. Ninian's tomb ; and in 1506 it was renewed for all persons of England, Ireland, and the Isle of Man, coming by sea or land to the Church of Whithern in honour of St. Ninian.

Numerous Churches in every part of Scotland are dedicated to him. In England there is one at Brougham, in the diocese of Carlisle, within the limits of his ancient diocese, the name of which is now corrupted into Ninechurch ; and another, it is believed, at a place, called St. Ninian's, in Northumberland, where an annual fair is held on his Day, (O. S.) Sept. 27. Many wells too in the Border counties are called by his name, and believed to have special virtues derived from him ; never drying in the hottest, or freezing in the coldest weather ; and still thought by the people to wash linen whiter than any other water.

The accounts of miracles wrought, and blessings obtained through his prayers, enter largely into the ordinary civil history of Scotland. For instance, David II. received several wounds from the English archers, at Neville's Cross, before he was taken prisoner ; one of the arrow heads could not be extracted, and remained, it is said by the historian of the times, till he went to St. Ninian's, then the flesh opened and the arrow head sprung out.

Besides other kings and nobles who visited the

shrine, James IV., on whom the memory of his father's death hung so heavily, made a pilgrimage to St. Ninian's (so Whithern was usually called), once at least every year. The treasurer's books of his reign contain many notices illustrative of the circumstances of his visits and his large almsgivings. One pilgrimage he made on foot to pray for the safety of his Queen on the birth of her first son, and, after her recovery, she came with a great attendance to return thanks for the blessing she had received. This was Margaret, the daughter of Henry VII. and the mother of our Stuarts.

In the next generation, when Whithern was again without a Bishop, these pilgrimages continued so rooted in the habits and affections of the people, that the utmost zeal of the preachers could not put them down, till they were made punishable by law, in 1581. Such was the regard for our holy Saint, and so deeply fixed in the minds of those who had been blessed by him. And doubtless it still lingers in the belief of those who enjoy the fair water of his springs, or show his cave to the passing stranger, or glory in the honour the Saint once gave to their native town.

James I. restored a Bishop to Galloway, who was consecrated in 1610. The succession continued till 1689 ; when John Gordon, the last Bishop, followed the King to Ireland and France, and continued to perform the offices of the English Church at St. Germain's. He died abroad ; and St. Ninian's country was again included in the diocese of Glasgow—in name, at least, for throughout the whole district of Galloway, there is no Clergyman or congregation in communion with the Scottish Bishops. So entirely has that portion been swept away, so dreary a region to an English-

man is the country, which St. Ninian blessed by his labours and his prayers.

In 1684 the tower of the Church was still standing among the ruins of the aisles, transepts, and extensive monastic buildings. All these are gone ; but we may still trace them partly in their foundations, partly as portions of houses, partly as used for building materials, or kept as ornaments. The chancel has been preserved, being used by the Parishioners, till of late years, as their place of worship. It was built upon the site of much more ancient buildings, which had been the crypt, as it would seem, of an extensive Church ; for there are large vaults of old and rude masonry around, which rise higher than the level of the chancel floor. They must have been part of the original Church of St. Ninian, of the fourth century ; or built by the Saxons in the eighth century, and it would be interesting to ascertain whether they are not really part of a Church, the building and date of which are so marked in the Ecclesiastical History of Scotland. The chancel is a well proportioned and beautiful specimen of the early English style. The South-west door-way is round, and elegantly worked, the windows pointed, of single lights. In the north wall, in the usual place near the east end, are two canopied recesses, apparently sepulchral ones, nearly on the level of the floor, in one of which doubtless St. Ninian's body lay.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The words, north and east are used, though improperly, for the Church stands north and south ; a circumstance which we may connect with St. Aelred, for that is the position of his Abbey Church at Rievaulx, and persons are sometimes glad to repeat even defects, when they remind them of a place they love. Fergus loved Aelred, and planted a colony of Cistercians from Rievaulx at Dundrennan ; St. Aelred himself was in Galloway, and probably concerned in founding the Priory.

This even is now dismantled ; a new building was erected about twenty years ago, which is the place of worship for the Parishioners ; and the roof and furniture were removed from the old chancel, and the mere walls left ; and that Church—once the most honoured in Scotland, where the holy remains of St. Ninian lay, and crowds of suppliants sought his intercession, where once the chaunt was heard by night and day, where holy men anticipated and prepared for heaven—that Church is now bare and roofless, exposed to the wild winds ; grass grows upon the pavement, and ivy and wild flowers ornament its walls. A sad sight indeed ; but it is beautiful in its ruins, and more pleasing far thus consecrated by loneliness and desolation, than defaced by incongruities, or applied to uses inconsistent with its spirit. A sad sight indeed, but one which harmonizes well with the condition of that system of which it formed a part ; a system the fair relics of which we love to trace in history, and complete in imagination ; which once was, and is no longer. Here St. Ninian laboured to raise a spiritual as well as a material Building, and to frame it in its services and doctrines after the Catholic model. Where is that Church ? Where are those services now ? There remains but a ruin of what once existed in beauty and honour.









